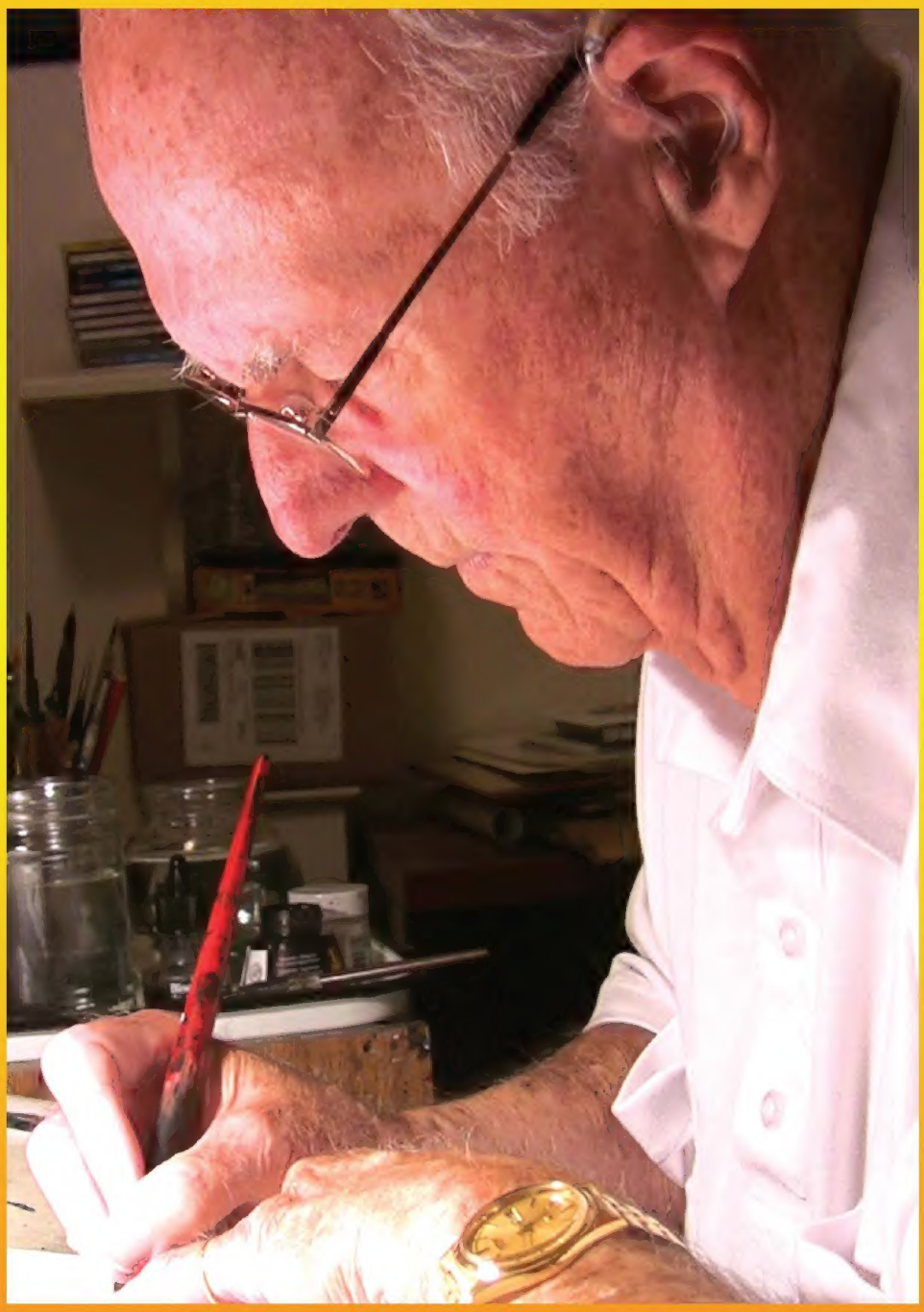
Comic Fandom Quarterly

#3 Q3 2015 $9.95

Fanning the Flames of Fandom for Future Fans!

Joe Sinnott Interview!



Fantastic Fanzine #2 In-Depth

Charlton Bullseye and Spotlight Fanzines Indexed!

Plus:

Two Decades of Comic Book Movies

Part Three of A Five Part Series

What's In Store?

As we have produced various publications over the years, we have made some alternate and limited editions of some of them. Some collectors and fans of our publications have asked about what alternate versions have previously been, and currently being, made by us.

For the video products, this has mostly taken the form of signed and numbered editions, signed by the creator. For print, we have tried a few other things like full-color editions. For those of you who like these alternate editions, we'll take a moment to go over some of the ones we have available.

For Dale's Comic Fanzine Price Guide, the regular edition is in Softcover, but there is a very limited Hardcover edition (50 copies) that is printed in FULL COLOR and is signed and numbered. Price is $75 each and it comes in a set with a copy of the Softcover as well. At the time of writing this, we only have about 6 copies left of this edition. Order it here at: http://www.amdalemedia.com/dfg2015.shtml

Comic Fandom Quarterly will have limited FULL COLOR editions of each issue. Each issue will be limited to 25 copies, about 15 of which have been spoken for so far. The website is currently set up for ordering issues #1-5, later issues will be added when issue #4 has been released. The issues can be ordered individually (though most people have been ordering entire sets) here: http://www.amdalemedia.com/cfq.shtml

We have also started to put our publications out in digital form. These are done as PDF files, and they are in FULL COLOR with NO DRM, viewable on any device that can view PDF files.

Here are URL's to all of the currently available products, which you can purchase on Gumroad:

Dale's Comic Fanzine Price Guide 2011 1st Edition ($4.99): https://gum.co/qPai

Dale's Comic Fanzine Price Guide 2015 2nd Edition ($4.99): https://gum.co/ZBDAg

CFQ #1 (.99 cents): https://gum.co/fUKZ

CFQ #2 (.99 cents): https://gum.co/wVfI

And more to come!

-Robin Dale

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Editor and Publisher: *Robin Dale*
Comic Fandom Quarterly logo designed by *Arlen Schumer*

Coming Soon
CFQ #4 - George Pérez interview
CFQ #5 - Matt Wagner interview
CFQ #6 - All Fanzine Issue!

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MANNY MARIS is ...

A longtime collector of books, magazines, limited editions, portfolios, prints, and pre-1973 FANZINES (amateur publications) on or about:

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- Amateur Producer's Magazine (or) Gotham Gazette (or) Magnum Opus [Steve Kelez] ALL issues
- Fantastic Films Illustrated (or) Phantasm [John Carpenter] ALL issues
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- Fantastic Fanzine Newsroom (or) The Guardsmen Of Infinity (or) Bombshell Bulletin [Gary Groth] ALL issues
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- Comic Feature (or) Power Comics (or) Super Spy (or) Blackjack [Larry Walczak] ALL issues

The following are excerpts taken from the extensive Creator Chronicles video interview with Joe Sinnott conducted in 2008.

In this interview, we talk with Joe, with some additional comments by his son Mark Sinnott and other peers, about Joe's long and illustrious several-decade career in comics.

Joe Sinnott: See I'd come out of the Navy, it was 1946, I was nineteen years old and I knew I wanted to go to art school and I know what I want to be, some kind of an artist, but I was playing ball, I worked in a cement plant where my father worked.

Mark Sinnott: He worked at the cement plant, it was just down the road from Saugerties for oh, probably a year, maybe a little less than a year and then he realized that the cement plant just wasn't for him, I mean he was out there in the bitter cold chop, you know, chopping away at the stone in the quarry. Now he got in a cement plant because his father was the foreman there. So that's how he started there, and then my dad's brothers all worked at the cement plant, all of them you know all my uncles, and my brother Joe works there to this day and he's been there thirty years. So the Sinnott's have been working at the cement plant forever. Except for dad, went to art school and became an artist.

Joe in 1946

JS: I always wanted to go to art school. So the winter of '48 I was working in a big limestone quarry and every day it's thirty below zero can you imagine, I'm working outside, 84 cents an hour, and thinking of a nice warm classroom appealed to me more and more all the time. So one Sunday I was reading the *Times* and to there was a little ad in there, it said "Cartoonists and Illustrators School - Burne Hogarth" and whatever and you know really appealing, and I said 'Oh they got a school for a cartoonist." So I looked into it you know and I went down there in March of 1949. I thought they took me because they need students you know, because all I had was little drawings I used to copy, you know, *Terry and the Pirates* and a *Smiling Jack* and everything I did it was a comic strip form, and all with a pen. In fact, in those days, I didn't even pencil, I just inked the drawings you know.

So that's all I brought down there you know. Silas Rhodes said "Joe, this is good stuff!" he said, and here again I said in the back of my mind 'they must want me awful bad to tell me that." So he says "I gotta show this to Burne Hogarth!" So he brought it in to Hogarth and Hogarth said you "Joe, you got to come here." He was a dynamic speaker and everybody couldn't wait till he came in and got to the easel, he could draw anything on easels, I tell you we were really impressed with him

But he was really strict. I mean if he saw you would drawing with a pen for example, he'd knock it out of your hand he'd say "We don't draw with anything but a brush here!" Even when we were drawing from the model, he'd knock it out of your hand and say that. We dip the brush in sepia ink and we draw with the brush. Well, there was time we draw with the charcoal too. But he was a fantastic teacher and fantastic artist, you know off the cuff, he didn't need any reference for anything you know, and he was great.

I wanted to be an illustrator, that's what I really want to be. I wanted to draw for like *Argosy* and *True* magazines you know men's magazines you know, animals and hunters and all that stuff. But anyway Hogarth says "You're a natural born cartoonist and I would advise you to take the cartooning course" you know. So I sad "oh, ok." I'll be glad to take anything you know.

I started in March, 1949 down there and Tom Gill was one of my instructors, and he liked what I was doing. He asked me if I'd like to work with him - this was only when I was down in the school for 6 months - he had a bunch of accounts Fawcett, Dell and he had Marvel of course - Timely. I remember Red Warrior was an Indian character and he was doing some westerns and whatever.

He was handsome guy and if you saw him when he taught at the cartoonists and illustrators school. He looked like Joe college, he wore bow ties, immaculate dresser, very sporty, tweed sport coats, crew-cut and a handsome guy. He was probably in his 30s - 34, 35 something like that, right in his prime, and a good artist like I said. A prodigious worker he worked all the time when he wasn't in school you know five days a

week he go home in Rockville Center and he worked on his comic. He also had a comic strip, but he had a lot of comic work. Tom time paid very well considering we were just students, and I remember I couldn't believe what he was paying.

Like I said I worked for them probably nine months and I felt guilty leaving him, but I felt I was ready to go on my own you know? Tom he said a couple times "You were ready, because you were doing all my work at one time." It started out I just do the inking, then he let me do the penciling, and he would ink the heads though to make a look like his work. But it got so that on *Kent Blake* I was doing everything. He didn't mind at all that I left off, though I'm sure he wanted me to stay with him because it made it easier for him.

Robin Dale: Now were you ghosting at this point, I mean were you uncredited at that time?

JS: Oh sure.

RD: How long were you working with him on that?

JS: Looking back I probably worked a year, a good year, but I still going to school. I was doing this at nights and weekends, but in those days you burned the midnight oil and you didn't mind, it wasn't 'work' in those days? Actually the page rate wasn't bad in those days, it was like thirty dollars a page you know. But, to a kid drawing for fun it was good money!

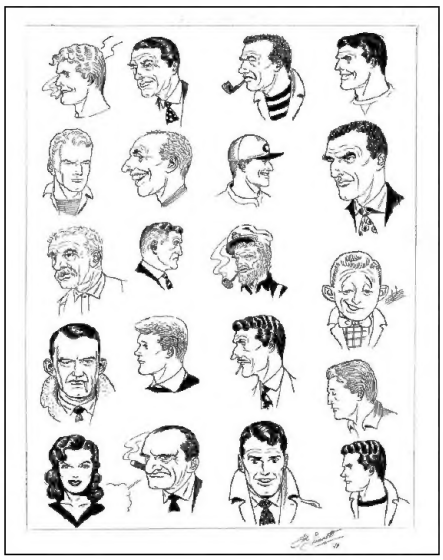
he did good horses. So we used to combine, he drew the horses and I drew the figures in the westerns. We'd go out to Rockville Center every weekend. Tom had a sunporch and we would work out there. We would lay all the pages down and we all contributed so to speak. It's amazing all the work that Tom turned out that way, you know, just the two of us working.

It was fun, and Tom and I have been friends all these years. He just died about a year ago, two years ago (2005) and we were friends all these years. I always felt funny that I left him because I was doing a lot of work for him, you know I was helping him out financially but he was helping me out too. I was on the G.I. Bill and they gave you a small pittance every month and I had to pay the school out of that and my supplies and live on it. They were tough times but real exciting times Rob, you know? Getting into comics I used to burn the midnight oil drawing all the time and boy it was exciting, especially to see your work in print. You know, you do it for nothin'. Other artists told you the same, just to get your work in print you know?

Frank Murphy and Living in New York City

MS: Frank Murphy was my dad's best friend in art school - they met in art school - shared an apartment in the city, they did everything together. They still staying contact to this day. Frank lives in Oklahoma, got into advertising I believe so he pursued the art field as well.

JS: It was a great time it's 1949, 1950 now down in the city. I was paying a dollar a day, seven dollars a week. I could live on a dollar a day



Early art by Joe (1945-49)

RD: Now that's for like finished product right?

JS: Pencil and inks.

RD: Did you do the word balloons as well?

JS: Just the art. I never did the lettering for anything. Although I hand-lettered everything in pencil on all the stories that I did for Stan in the 50's. We had to, to find out how much room the letterer would need.

Tom had a boy and a girl - a beautiful family. His wife died quite young. Tom remarried later on, to a woman named Trish, and she was a beautiful woman too. She's still alive, a very nice person. Tom lived to be about 93 you know, roughly. There was another guy that worked with Tom, young guy just come out of service, Norman Steinberg, and he could draw great horses. I was better I think at figures than he was, but

- ten cents for breakfast, a cup of coffee was a nickel, and a doughnut was a nickel at the automat, ten cents on the subway to go down to the school, and for lunchtime I had these 'nibble-a-nab' for a nickel. They were cheese crackers with peanut butter in them, and I bought a Pepsi for a nickel - twelve ounce bottle - for a nickel! That was my lunch. So far I spent thirty cents for the day. Supper time, Frank and I would go down to Times Square, we got a big platter of full of spaghetti - thirty five cents, and then we walk home. We walk from 42nd Street up the 72nd Street, and I'd buy the newspaper, the evening news - the paper came out at night then - 2 cents.

So I spent less than a dollar a day living in New York, living in a building that had three elevator operators, and it was all marble and I was on the first floor and I had a kitchen privileges and it was just a great time to be in the city. There was no muggings, you know none of that stuff. Great, great time. So anything I made like with the textile people, you know it was all gravy, I tell you it was just great.

When he moved to Tulsa, the first year he moved there I got a Christmas card from him, he had an extra name tacked on - Mary Jo - that was his little baby girl. Next year - Mary Jane. Seven years, he had seven girls, can you imagine? Never had a boy! Then he stopped. So he calls me every St Patrick's Day and every Christmas and we have a great time talking.

MS: My dad is the god father of one of Frank's daughter. To this day many years later they still stay in contact. Every now and then Frank will make a cross-country trip and stop by and visit. It's been a few years, but every now and then he will pop in and surprise dad. It's really nice.

While working for Tom Gill there he had his first work published for St John's publishing.

Trudi

JS: St. John's Publications. The first thing I ever did, we were in school of course, and you'd talk about syndicates and guys would say gee you know I'd like to go over there and see if I could get some work. So a fellow named Sam Schwartz - now that sounds like someone who's got a hock shop, doesn't it? But in any case, he said I heard the St John's is you know hiring and giving out scripts. So I took my little samples that I'd done in school, and I went over to St John's one afternoon and the editor was a woman. I never expected to get what I got from her. She gave me a five or six page strip from a comic book called *Mopsie. Mopsie* was fairly popular in those days you know, all the girls read them. So anyway my story was called *Trudi*. I was just a little simple story. So she gave me the script and I took it back to my apartment and I worked on it, I probably spent a week on it. I should have been done three days but you know I was going to be careful with it and I brought it back and she liked it, but that's when Tom Gil asked me to work for him and you know I would rather be doing Tom's adventure stuff than the *Trudi* type stories. But I really appreciated St. Johns giving me the first work that I was ever paid for.

Timely Comics and Working for Stan Lee

MS: From art school, he went right to Timely Comics working for Stan. He would go into Stan's office, Stan would give them a script just off of the top of the pile whatever it was you know. It didn't have to be necessarily a war story or romance - whatever it was he pulled one off the top, give it to Dad, Dad would take this home - Dad was unique in that way where he lives a hundred miles from the city - he would take the train to and from the city. He would go home, pencil the story, ink the story, bring it back, drop it off with Stan, and pick up another story. Stan would give him another script off the top of his pile. Once a week he would do this. Sometimes he would have to work in Stan's office, he would go down there and Stan would say "Joe I got some corrections that need to be done on this art or that' and you know he may spend the day there, but it would be a once a once a week deal. All this stuff was done right from the studio here, you know, hundred miles away. After he'd done this for several years, eventually he would just start mailing the work in, and the work would get sent to him.

JS: Betty and I got married at that time in August of 1950, so I said to Betty, I said "You know I'm doing all of Tom's work, Stan Lee is buying it all, so he can't reject me." So I go over to Stan Lee and he said "You doing Tom's work, huh? I see the similarity." So anyway he gave me a script to do and I went home and did it, and brought it back, *"The Man Who Wouldn't Die"* was the name of it. It was a western, you know pencil and ink, five or six pages, and he gave me another script right away. Since that time I've been with Stan for 57 years.

About that time I felt I was secure in getting work, that's when I left Tom, I said to Betty I want to go back up to Saugerties, you know, I like Saugerties better than the city, and I can live any place I want. So we came back up to Saugerties, and I'd go down every Friday, take the subway down to the Empire State Building, and we'd see a movie and maybe have dinner there down there. Betty used to like to go over to Gimbel's basement. It was a great day, but you lost all day you know?

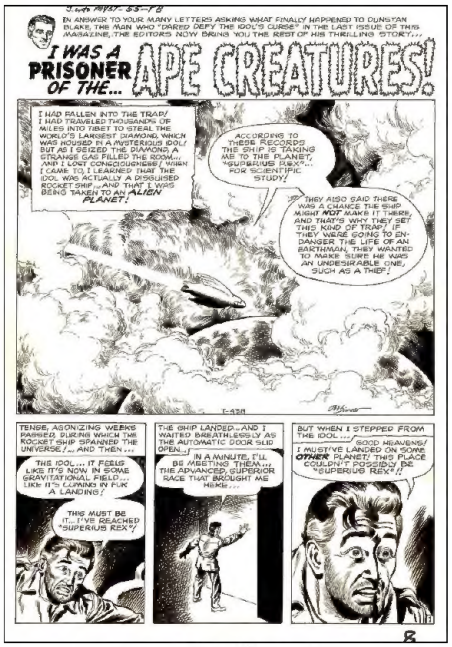
So I did that for about 10 years 'till we went belly up, and then once we started back up again certainly I didn't go down on a Friday you know I'd stay home and work on something else, because I was doing on a lot of stuff. I had a lot of other accounts I had picked up: Treasure Chest, Dell, Charlton, ACG. A lot of fun, working like a devil though, you know? It was good working at home where you didn't have to answer to anybody. Stan never called me about "Joe, I want to change this, I'll send it back to you," they never sent anything ever, ever back to me. Maybe if they did a change like they used to flip on a cover for example they would flip the figure they want it coming in from the left rather than the right, little things like that they may have done.

Going down to the old Timely offices in the 50s especially, you'd go in there and of course you sat in the little waiting room, and Stan would take one person at a time naturally, and one of his assistants would come out - Bob Brown or someone - and say "Joe, Stan'll see you now," or whatever but it was interesting. I can remember Gene Colon, Gene's about my age, of course when I went there I was probably 23 I think and Gene looked like a kid, you know, and there'd be Bob Powell, Syd Shores, some of the old guys, Bill Everett, that everybody reads about so to speak you know? So it was interesting, the old waiting room, waiting to go see Stan, and you'd go in and there Stan would be behind his desk, with his typewriter and a stack of scripts on his left and he'd be type writing on the yellow legal paper. So he'd look at your work comment on it, and most of the time of course he'd like it, then he'd reach over and take a script off the top and you never knew what it was going to be, and you

DRINK DEEP, VAMPIRE
ONE OF THE STRANGEST TALES EVER TOLD!
HERE IS THE CHILLING STORY OF A MAN WHO DID BUSINESS WITH THE VAMPIRES!

Strange Tales #9

wouldn't say to him, "Stan, give me a western this week" or "Give me a war story," you know you just took it from Stan you know? Stan was barely out of his middle-twenties then, you know? He'd give you the script, it didn't take long, maybe 10 minutes, and he'll say "I'll see you next week Joe!" and I'll say "Stan, I want to see if I got any books," and your books would be in a rack in the next room where they had a little bull pen with a couple of guys behind desks. Now, I didn't know those guys in those days, but obviously it was John Buscema was there early, before he went to advertising, and people like that, but I never really had any conversations with them. I'd go over to the wall where the books were stored in racks, and you only could take your own book, you couldn't take somebody else's book. You'd have maybe a book or two on the racks. That was about the whole procedure down there when you brought your script in you know, very quick.



Journey Into Mystery #55

You could tell that Stan loved his work. He loved what he was doing. Even though he was just knocking out these simple stories. We used to make fun of Stan out in the waiting room, we say "Stan, he writes the same story whether it's a westerner a war story, just the names are changed." But Stan was a great writer, we loved working for him because he kept the dialogue to a minimum, and you know artists like to see there art work, they don't want to be you know covered up by balloons and captions and everything and leaving us no space to draw. Stan always seem to know just what the people wanted and he was great to work for in that respect. Of course the whole system changed later on when Stan would you know give us a synopsis to the artist and the artists would really work hard drawing this story and Stan would just put the dialogue in after he got the artwork back.

I can't say enough for Stan's creations - of course we know a lot of them he co-created with Kirby and other people, but without Stan's input Marvel never would have attained the success that it did. The rates were good you know, I was up to 44 dollars a page before the started [cutting back]. Stan would call and say "Joe can you take a 2 dollar cut?" I was shocked! It took a couple years - we got down to 21 dollars a page, and that hurt because you did the same quality of work that you did for 44 dollars. Then when we started back up - I never got lower than 21 - and when we started back up in late 1959, we got 21 dollars, and then it took a couple years, in fact through the monster period I can't recall getting raises you know. Once we hit the superhero stuff and they realized how popular they were, you know we didn't realize they were going to do anything, we just thought they were another book. When I did *Thor*, for example, and *Incredible Hulk*, *Fantastic Four*, you know they were just another character. When I did the *Fantastic Four #5*, I had never seen the *Fantastic Four*, and I said gee, these are good characters you know, and great story. But you thought maybe six months the book would be gone like all the other books, you know? Of course it was that second coming of the superheroes.

MS: Original art you know years ago wasn't seen the way it is today. When Dad did all those all those stories, pencils and inks and lettering off of a script for Timely and Atlas all through the 50s, he never got any of that art back. I mean you know years later he might have got a few stories back that surfaced, you know, somewhere along the way, but not from Marvel. What they did with these stories a lot of times they would use them as drop cloths on the floor while they're painting their offices and stuff like that and they would just get torn up and thrown out. I mean once a book was published they had no need for the art anymore. You know who thought to return it to the artist you know? They just had no use for it anymore. You know they got what they needed out of it, so time to move on, wait for the next story to come in.

Arrowhead

JS: Another thing of interest would be when I worked on *Arrowhead*, I think it was 1952 when Stan sent me the script, of course he didn't sent it to me, I went down and picked it up, and he didn't say anything at the time, and I brought it home. I started following it, the splash said - it was a montage type thing - and it said show a very regal looking Indian in the middle and around the Indian in smaller drawings things that occur in a typical Indian camp. You know the woman running up a rug, the buck coming home with the block you know, so to speak, and the kids playing with sticks, some kind of game on the ground - different things like that. So I remember at the time that was the first *Arrowhead* book that we worked on, and I brought it home and I penciled the splash and it didn't come out bad I don't think, especially the little drawings I did.

ARROWHEAD
THUMP!
THE HUGE BUFFALO SLAMMED INTO ARROWHEAD AND HIS WAR HORSE LIKE A HAIRY JUGGERNAUT AND IT MARKED THE BEGINNING OF THE KILLER'S TRAIL FOR THE RENEGADE PAWNEE BRAVE!
Arrowhead #3

So I finished the whole story - pencil on ink - and I brought it to Stan and he says "Joe, it has no guts!" the first time he ever told me that you know, the only time. Stan was always one for exaggerating things which was great for comics especially. He said "I want the reader to turn the page and want to see what's on page two" he said "you got nice little drawings here, but they don't mean anything." He says "Show me the Indian character *Arrowhead* coming right at me with a Tomahawk" you know and you want to turn the page to see what he's going to do with it. And of course he was right. Because the splash had nothing going on, it was not exciting at all. So I did that, I brought it home and I did the Indian character running right at the person that's reading and I brought it back, and of course he loved it that way. I really loved doing *Arrowhead*.

I don't know if the movie came first, but there was a movie called *Arrowhead* and Burt Lancaster played in. But as you know he was a renegade and the law was always after him but he was always taking care of the bad Indians so to speak. I love doing Westerns of course and I felt at the time that was one of the better things that I had done in the 50s. He was a great character to work on you know and horses he had that Pinto horse and the drawings they looked good it was a good looking book you know.

MS: When my Dad was doing *Arrowhead*, he received his first fan letter. Dad had answered the letter, drew him a little sketch. This is back in the early 50s when nobody thought of doing this.

JS: I got my first fan letter from a kid in Connecticut named Roland Syphurs. He was probably 18 years old and he told me he loved the character and he loved the book. He corresponded with me for at least a year, but the Korean War was still going on at that time and he told me he was going in the Army and he would keep in touch. I never heard from him again. That was 1952, 53 and I thought sure he must of been dead and I didn't have his Connecticut address, I must have lost the envelope. I had the letter, but I didn't have his Connecticut address.

THE KID FROM TEXAS
A SNARLING PACK OF WOLVES AND A GIANTHEADED BEAR JOIN THE KID'S BEGINNING TO LOOK LIKE THE END GAME. THE KID FROM TEXAS IS OUTNUMBERED SOMETHING EVEN HE'S NEVER FACED BEFORE! THIS IS HARD TO BELIEVE!
I CAN'T TAKE AN UNEVEN FIGHT, EVEN WHEN IT COMES TO DUMB BRUTES!
HE NEITHER, KID!
BLAM! BLAM!
BANG!
THAT THEY DO, KID? RECKON THEY'LL KEEP GOIN' TOO?
MAYBE! ANYWAY WE'VE DONE OUR BIT!
BUT WHEN THEY TURNED THEIR ATTENTION AGAIN TO THE BEAR...
HOW ABOUT THAT! IT'S A SHE BEAR, AND THAT'S WHAT HER CUBS!
NO DOUBT SHE WAS DEFENDING IT AGAINST THE PACK! NO SAYING WHAT WOULD HAVE HAPPENED IF WE DON'T KEEP AT!

Guns of the West #44

MS: It was funny because years and years later up until I think it was maybe two years ago Dad said "I wonder whatever happened to this gentleman" you know I haven't heard from in years. I guess the guy used to send Christmas cards or whatever. But he hadn't heard from him in many, many years. So he started researching.

JS: Jim Amash told me how he could contact anybody in the United States. I called the number and his wife answered the phone. So we got talking, I told her who I was. I told her I drew a character called arrowhead back in the 50s and Roland was going off to war and I told him that his [letter] was my the first fan mail that I had ever received. So I asked her, I said is Roland still alive? And she he is but he's very ill. She said he can't talk anymore and she said he's still at home but he won't be able to talk on the telephone. So you know I was really upset over that and I said well tell Roland that I'm glad I found him. I said I would contact him I dropped him a note in the mail. So about a week later I got all the *Arrowhead* books I had and in fact I made a copy of the letter that he wrote when he was 18 years old, I mailed that to him along with - I went down to the Office Depot and I had all the *Arrowhead* pages copied and they did a beautiful job on them and I sent him all the books on *Arrowhead*. Figured maybe he didn't have them anymore you know? So his wife called back four or five days later and she said how excited he was to read the artwork and to see his old letter again and then it was less than a month later she called me and said Roland had passed away. A really sad ending but it's amazing that I was able to contact him before he died and at least let him know that I was still thinking of him and he got the *Arrowhead* that he could see again you know. In fact I drew a pencil sketch of Arrowhead. She said he was really thrilled to get it you know?

MS: You know it was just amazing, that Dad would think of that at the time he thought of it and just happened to you know to get it out to him. Just an amazing story.

The Comics Code

MS: Also while working for timely and Altas he did a few horror, he did quite a few horror. When I say horror, I mean vampire and werewolf stuff, yeah he did quite a few of that, mainly in the early 50s. Then he did a lot of war, some westerns, some romance, a lot of scifi - he's done it all. He's covered the whole genre of the Atlas universe.

JS: Oh I did a lot of stuff in the 50s that I really liked, you know, I wish I had the artwork on it. I did the life of General Dean. He was the only general that was captured in Korea and of course he was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. I did a lot of good war stories that I liked and the couple westerns. Well I did a lot of westerns, like *The Kid From Texas*. But I did so many war stories, [to Mark] you know, you counted them up! That was up my alley too I think. I think I did a better job on the westerns, war, and science fiction than any of the others. The others were pretty good you know. But I really thought I did a good job on those Rob, you know.

During the 50s I had a period there, and I told Mark, and Mark said I can't tell the difference, but I did some bad work from say '54 to '56, I was going through a terrible period, I was suffering from panic attacks. They're horrible, you think you're dyin', I mean you honestly think you're dyin', and I think it was from the stress from, well me being married. It happens to young people they say and the fact that Marvel started counting our rates, I was probably getting apprehensive about my work, and the work was starting to suffer something terribly. At the time I thought it was all right, but looking back on them I hardly put any detail in my work. They were simple. I did a lot of mystery stories in those days, you know, *Journey Into Mystery*, *Strange Tales*, stuff like that. Marvel had a lot of mystery books as you know. When I look at it, it was right after the *Arrowhead* books which were really you know it was my best style in the 50s I think you know, and then came the period where I didn't put any detail, and even part of it was *Devil Dog Duggan*. The art got better, but *Devil Dog Duggan* was still wide open, and it just wasn't the same. It came back in '57, late '56, '57 and I did some of my best stuff for Timely. I did my best stuff from '52, '53, maybe '54 and then '56 to '59, especially the later years. The early stuff was good too, it was those middle years that I was suffering from those panic attacks, and those panic attacks I had known for a good four years. I'd hate to go through that period again you know. No recurrences since then.

And those days they didn't know much about the panic attacks. I'd be driving along in my car singing a song, first thing you know you get this feeling, it starts in the bottom of your feet, and it comes right up through your body, it you feel like you're dying. So I go to the doctor and I tell him, and he says it's your nerves, you're working too hard, you know they didn't know what it was, but now they know it's a panic attack.

THERE MUST BE SOMEONE MORE MEAN AND HEARTLESS EVEN THAN YOU AND SOMEDAY YOU'LL GET YOURS, SARAH HARPER!
COME QUIETLY PLEASE
BEFORE
THERE MUST BE SOMEONE MORE MEAN AND HEARTLESS EVEN THAN YOU AND SOMEDAY YOU'LL GET YOURS, SARAH HARPER!
COME QUIETLY PLEASE
AFTER

Sara original and redrawn versions

I don't know whether you knew during the Comics Code they had one of my stories in front of the Congress.

MS: He did a story called *Sarah,* that was the title of a story for Atlas Comics in 1957. The Comics Code Authority didn't approve of the story. The lady, Sarah, looked too much like a witch.

JS: Course, Sarah was really a vicious, weird looking character. I really knocked myself making her sort of a, well she was a terror to look at her. She was in the splash of course.

MS: They said "We can't have kids looking at this story." Now [Frederick] Wertham was on TV showing the original splash page of Sarah explaining the Comics Code to the viewers, and it was Joe's art that was shown on TV.

JS: But he said something to the effect of "Look at this story, look at this person here. This is influencing kids all over the country." The one they corrected, my Sarah, they made her look like a nanny in England, with a nice little apron.

MS: Looking like a good-looking housewife, that's what Sarah was!

JS: There was no mystery or horror to it at all.

Charlton

MS: When Dad began working for Charlton, Vince Colletta had called to give him some work. Dad would do the pencils on all these Charlton romance stories for Vince. They were Colletta's accounts, so Dad wasn't paid by Charlton, he was paid by Vince Colleta. He did over 2700 pages for Vince Colletta from when the comics code came in, 1958 to about '63-'64. All pencils, Vince Colletta would ink Joe's pencils. Joe did full detail pencils, beautiful pages. 90-95 five percent was romance, but Joe also did about 10 issues of *Gorgo*. He also did *Reptisaurus*, which is like a spinoff of *Gorgo*.

Again he did these in the 60s while working for Marvel, he was busy, the 60s was a busy time for Joe. I know a lot of you wonder why didn't he pencil, why did he just ink? Well, he did pencil you know 2700 pages of Charlton, all pencil. No credit, because it was all Colletta's account. So if you see any of these pages out there - we have ledgers it's just pages of all the stories he's done - nothing says Joe Sinnott or Vince Colletta. If you see any Charlton romance pages out there or are comics out there that aren't signed by the artist, it's a good chance it was Joe.

Yeah he did those 2700 pages in 5 or 6 years. A lot of these were 5 or 6 page stories, some were 10 page stories, the Gorgo's were 20 page stories. But yeah, he did a lot of work you know. He would work for Marvel during the day, that was his primary account. Marvel or Treasure Chest, or both. Then at night, after supper, like 6-7 o'clock at night probably till 9 or 10pm, he would pencil the Charlton pages. That was his schedule, probably from 7 in the morning 'till 9 or 10 at night, every day, for six years.

Romantic Secrets #31

Classics Illustrated and Treasure Chest

MS: In the early 1960s, Joe also worked for Classics Illustrated. He did one story for them, it was a *Classics Illustrated Jr.* The story was called "The Enchanted Dear," and he penciled and inked the entire story, realistic looking.

JS: I don't know who the editor was, I wish I could remember his name. He said "Joe, we wanted this done in a for kids, you know not realistically." So he showed me an example of how he liked it. So I brought the work back and I penciled the whole thing all over again. It was easy because I just use the same layouts, only I drew the girl as, you know, a cute little almost-Walt-Disney type, and she had a Deer friend or whatever. So they liked it, and they bought it.

Treasure Chest

MS: However that art doesn't exist, none of it. Not the original, or the [realistic] story, or you know the 'cartoon' story. Where it is, who knows?

JS: Well I was looking for any kind of work then, I was doing all advertising. The kids brought home the comic book and I was looking at it and I said "Gee, maybe they can use my type of work?" Reed Crandall was working for them, Dick Giordano, people like that. They did a variety of stuff, they did all kinds of artwork. You know you humorous stuff and realistic stuff and sports. It fit in perfectly with my samples you know?

MS: When the Comics Code Authority killed the comics in the late 50s pretty much - it put a lot of people out of work - Dad had to find work in other areas. He worked for the Fuller Brush company for a short time. I think he worked at the post office during Christmas, you know, during the Christmas rush. He did advertising art, picking up little side jobs too and stuff like that. And he found work at Treasure Chest comics, for probably ten or twelve years doing biographical stories. You know life of Pope John, life of Joyce Kilmer, Douglass MacArthur, Eisenhower. He got more satisfaction out of working for Treasure Chest than doing the super heroes, and you know and before that the horror stories and whatnot. That what he really liked to do, the true to life story. He still likes that to this day, he would prefer to do that than the superheroes. That's what he does some of the sport cartoons that he does and you know the Crosby record albums things like that, that's what he really enjoys doing.

But I truly believe - if you've never seen a Treasure Chest comic of his, you've got to pick one up. When you look at the art and the detail, it's just incredible. And he did everything, pencils, inks, and the lettering. While doing that, that's why he only inked for Marvel. Once the superheroes took over, was primarily because of Treasure Chest - he was doing the pencils, the inks and the lettering for Treasure Chest, [and] working for Marvel doing the inks, on two books a month, you can see his schedule was pretty busy. He was also doing crossword puzzle covers, he was working a little bit for Dell comics at the time, ACG Comics, you know doing a few stores. So he was doing a lot of work in the 60s. Now when Treasure Chest folded in 1972 or '73, he strictly worked for Marvel. Now he could have gone back to just doing pencilling and inking, but he stuck with the inking because he was

getting two books a month, then at that point they started sending him many covers to ink. So if you look he's worked on probably all the pencillers Marvel had in the 70s. He's done, if not a story, he's done at least a cover with them. He's done many covers through the years as you know.

JS: I can tell you the things I was doing for Treasure Chest. The first story I ever did for them was *The Battle of Pearl Harbor* and then they sent me a biography of Joyce Kilmer the great poet from New Jersey. I remember in school one of my favorite poems was always Joyce Kilmer, along the Erie track [The House With Nobody in It] it was called.

Whenever I walked to Suffern,
along the Erie track.
I go by a poor old farmhouse,
with its shingles broken and black.

But he lived in that area and so he wrote about Suffern and the railroad tracks near his home. Of course, we all know that he wrote *Trees,* I think the greatest poem ever written. So I did his life story. So then I guess they like the way I was I did the likenesses. In fact that happened with the Beatles. Evidently the editor saw some of my work on Treasure Chest and the Babe Ruth, so he gave me the Beatles Story to do, and of course I also did the FBI for them with J. Edgar Hoover. Then they asked me to do *12 O'Clock High.* The likenesses had to be just like the likenesses on the TV show, they had it very popular TV show. So I did that for about 3 or 4 issues maybe a little more, but then the TV show was cancelled so they had to cancel the book. I really enjoyed doing that book because I loved drawing airplanes and this was all the B-17 bombers that we had at that time in World War Two.

TWELVE OCLOCK HIGH #1
RIGHT GROUP LEADER TO SAVAGE: FLAK HEAVY! CAN WE GO UP?
NO. MAINTAIN YOUR LEVEL AND DO NOT PULL UP. THE FLIGHT PLANS CALLS FOR INCREASED ALTITUDE! MAINTAIN FLIGHT PATTERN!
THE BOMB BAY DOORS ARE SWUNG OPEN! BELOW LOOMS THE NIGHT SHATTERED BY BURSTING FLAK...
WE'RE BEGINNING TO CLIMB AS PER EVADE THEIR FLAK SIBLEY READY TO JUMP?
READY AS I'LL EVER BE!
CAREFULLY, THE NAVIGATOR PLOTS THE PLANE'S POSITION! AS IT NOSES TOWARD THE DROP ZONE, HE SIGNALS OUT OF THE BOMBER'S BELLY A ONE-FIGURE HURTLES...
SAVAGE TO GROUP LEADERS: CLIMB! CLIMB!
NOW TO PRAY THAT KEEPING LOW FOR SIBLEY'S SAKE WASN'T COST ME ANY MEN
12 O'Clock High #1

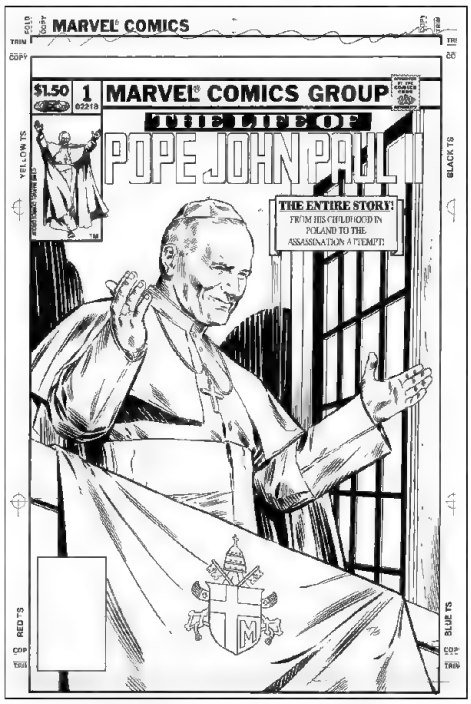
But back to Treasure Chest, they gave me so many, I had some hard stories a do but Reed Crandall worked for them also, and they gave Reed all the really hard ones - the building of the Brooklyn Bridge, and the Panama Canal, and he was such a - he covered everything, he wouldn't leave anything out. He was just a great illustrator. So I did the biographies and he did all the Panama Canal type stories. Here again for a Treasure Chest, I did Babe Ruth, I did Ty Cobb, I did John Kennedy, I did McArthur, Eisenhower, I did Robert Ripley. You remember Robert Ripley, his *Believe It Or Not*? I did his life story. Jim Tunney the heavyweight champion that defeated Jack Dempsey. There were so many, and I love doing biographies because fortunately I could do likenesses pretty well, and all those books came out fairly good. I did the president of Ireland, we did about four books on his life, and all this while I was squeezing in the Marvel stuff.

You know it was just amazing when I look back at some of my work in the index that Mark put together, that was a labor of love. It really amazes me that I was able to turn out so much work, and I also did *The Beatles* at that time when they came over to be Ed Sullivan's show. They wanted the book out before they got here, so they could capitalize on their visit, and you know the Beatles weren't all that famous at that time you know a lot of people hadn't heard of them. I didn't know anything about them, it was hard to find any reference on them, there were no magazines or anything. But I prevailed a little bit I guess and they were quite happy. I did the 65 pages in about 30 days. I got a little help from Dick Giordano, my old friend. We used to work together years ago doing industrial type books for GE and Radio Shack. I used to pencil the books and Dick would ink them. So I ran into a little problem with the Beatle book because it was 65 pages and I had 30 days to do it, so I called Dick and he helped me on the Ringo Starr segment and of course the whole book they were quite happy with it, the editors down at Dell.

I also worked with Paul Reinman. I pencilled, and Paul inked, for ACG Comics on John Force. That was interesting too. Here again, I probably, I know I didn't need the work, but Paul was a good friend of mine. He used to be an instructor at the Cartoonists and Illustrators School, so I knew him from there, and I hated to turn him down and it was just a question of squeezing in all these assignments and meeting the deadlines. I never did miss a deadline, so I was fairly fast. So here again a busy, busy period, the early 60s on up through the 60s you know.

The Life of Pope John Paul II

MS: Again Marvel when they were doing biographical books, they asked Joe to do you know the life story of Mother Teresa and Pope John Paul the Second. John Tartaglione pencilled them and Joe inked them, again because of his love biographical of characters, and they knew Joe would be perfect for this because he loved doing that.



The Life of Pope John Paul II #1

Jim Salicrup: A title that I got Joe to ink for me was a one-shot at Marvel called *The Life Story of Joe Pope John Paul II.* You know I almost equate Joe as being as incredible a person as Pope John Paul II, they're both unbelievably nice people, and I know Joe did an outstanding job on that, we were all proud of both his work and the penciller John Tartaglione, they did an incredible job.

John Romita: A project that would have daunted most people, working on the life of John Paul II, with John Tartaglione, said it was a joy to work on. Let me tell you, as a man who has inked other people's stuff, and pencilled stuff that ambitious, that is no joy, that is hard work. He found joy in it. The more work they fed him, the more joy he found. All I did can tell you is, there are very few people in any business, but in particular this business which takes a lot of dedication and discipline and patience to turn out the fresh beautiful stuff that he has turned out his whole life, is an amazing accomplishment. That's all I can tell you.

MS: To this day, they are my Dad's two favorite stories. I know the Pope story is my Dad's favorite story he's ever done. So you can see you know his enjoyment out of doing these type of stories. That was the best thing he ever did, the Pope story.

JS: So you know things exploded probably from '61 right up through the 60s. So many books were coming out -*The Incredible Hulk* and of course *Spider-Man* come out '62, you know. It was a busy period, and I look back now I often wonder how I was able to turn out all the work that I did because I'd squeeze in a story for like Dell or Treasure Chest. I was doing two books a month for Marvel and it was amazing and I would do an occasional - you hated to turn things down in those days because you never know if we were going to go belly up again, so you wouldn't refuse anybody.

Fantastic Four #5

I did drawings of Albany public markets, I did billboards, record covers and doing covers for a crossword magazine publisher. This was all fun to do really because I like the diversity of other work, other than the superheroes, so it was a lot of fun doing all these different things but it was a hectic schedule. My kids were all young at the time in '64, Mark was only three years old. So you know you had to live to and take the kids to little league games and all that so it was a very busy schedule for me during that period.

The Fantastic Four

JS: We went right from the monster books, it was a smooth transition right into the super heroes, although we didn't know that we were doing it, we just thought some more characters that Stan's putting out trying to sell a few books.

MS: When dad returned to Marvel in the early 60s, you know he had already had a work at Dell and Treasure Chest, so now he was returning to Marvel, so he was basically going to do inking instead of the pencils. So Joe was getting into the inking more when he came back to Marvel. When Kirby had left *Thor*, he had only done a few issues when it first started out, then Joe became the regular penciller and in inker from *Journey Into Mystery* for about 6 or 7 issues before you know totally going to inking for Marvel.

JS: Of course in '61 in November we did the first Fantastic Four. Of course I wasn't working on that book, but I had done a story with Jack Kirby. It probably was still part of the monster period. Pilldor, a pirate from outer space. This came out in November 1961 and I always thought Pilldor was the prototype for the Thing. He was lumpy and very much like the Thing. I was quite happy with the way that story turned out, and it was the same month that Stan worked on the *Fantastic Four #1*. As you know I worked on [*Fantastic Four*] #5. Even though I knew that there was a Fantastic Four book, I had never seen it. Stan asked me if I could do #5 I said sure send it up, and when I got it I was really amazed of the great characters [like] the Thing, you know, we hadn't been doing anything like that. Of course Johnny is an old take off on the Human Torch, and Sue and Reed of course brought back memories of the old Plastic Man you remember? I was amazed, even Doctor Doom, he was the villain and he appeared for the first time in that issue.

And I just thought it was a great story and great characters and I was amazed really, and of course I didn't feel at that time that it was going to be as successful as it turned out to be, but evidently it did. After I had finished it, Stan he liked it so well he called me up and said "Joe, I'm gonna send you #6!" and he sent me #6 and at the time I had an account also at Treasure Chest like we mentioned before and I had promised them I was going to do the life of one of the Popes. It was sixty five pages long, pencil and ink, and that's a lot of work. So I never knew when it was going to come in, and it came in the same time that Stan sent me #6. So I call Stan, I said "Stan, I have to do this for Treasure Chest. I promised them I would do it" and I said I'm going to have to send back #6 - I had done three or four panels. I hated to give it up, but I really wanted to do the life of the Pope, and that was the reason I didn't stay on the FF.

MS: So had Treasure Chest not said to Joe, "We need you to do the Pope story" instead of that long run the Joe had with Jack from #44 on, it could have been from #5 on it you know could have been a lot longer run on the FF than he had.

Jerry Ordway: When I was a kid, the classic stuff was happening in the Marvel books especially Fantastic Four. Joe came on the Fantastic Four after a long stretch of really inferior inkers kinda killing the book in a way. When he came on with the Inhumans stuff, to me it was so precise and so clean it made Kirby stand out all the more, and I think I became a fan pretty much there. I found out later that I'd been reading his *Thor* stuff that he had pencilled and inked years earlier, they were back issues and I hadn't really noticed at the time, it's like "Oh he's an inker - wait, he also pencilled, wow cool!" I've been a fan of his work for ever and I think I've certainly tried to emulate, I've stolen a couple of his little tricks here and there like his rendering on rocks, the radiating lines, worked hard to try to figure out how to do those with you know a straight edge and pen tip or brush.

Fantastic Four #98

Joe Jusko: Everybody wanted Joe. You know a lot of people wanted Royer over Kirby because they thought it was closer to the pencils and stuff, but I thought the Kirby/ Sinnott combination was just beyond reproach, I really did. It was the perfect combination on that book, for the FF. I don't think that anybody else could have made that book as popular as it was except for the two of them. You know looking back on the stories that they did, it was just absolutely astonishing. They were

like a perfect storm that came together you know and those issues are just absolutely incredible. That stuff is timeless it really is, and I just went back and re-read a whole chunk of it. It's incredible. The art is just absolutely beautiful.

Joe Meets Jack Kirby

MS: Joe and Jack you know they worked together for years on the *The Fantastic Four* but they never met each other. There was a few phone conversations here and there. Jack would never say you know "Joe do somethin' this way or do somethin' that way." In other words, all the stories they worked on together, Jack would just mail the pages and Joe would ink them, they'd be returned, everything was fine. 1972 New York convention they met briefly for the first time at a luncheon and you know they might have had a ten minute visit with each other and that was it. Then again at the Marvel convention 1975, the first Marvel convention, Jack was there and Joe was there and they spent three days together at the convention talking to one another, spent a lot of time together. That was the only time that Jack Kirby and Joe Sinnott ever met, aside from you know briefly in '72, just that 1975 Marvel convention.

Fantastic Four #50

JS: [In 1972] Marie Severin introduced us, because I knew Marie, and she was in the hallway and she said "Joe, did you ever meet Jack Kirby?" and I said no I really never did and she said he's in the other room she said I'll go him. So I remember her bringing him out, Jack Kirby. Of course we fall over each other you know. I don't remember if I talked to him the rest of that year, that convention. Then of course in '75 we spent three days together. Lot of pictures were taken of us, so that was the last I saw him.

MS: They had a luncheon and all the artists were on the dais, and there's Stan you know talking to everybody and my dad sits down next to Stan, and Stan says "Jack Keller! Good to see you! Haven't seen you in so long! When you coming back to work for us?" So my dad thought Stan was pulling his leg, so Dad says "I'll come back to work for you when you start paying me a little better!" So then Dad moved down the table, sat down next to John Romita, and then you know they were talking for a little bit and Romita nudges Dad and says "Joe, he really thinks you're Jack Keller!" you know? So I guess John must have told Stan " Hey, that's Joe Sinnott!" So Stan goes over to my Dad to apologize and says "Joe I really thought you were Jack Keller" because you know my Dad would see Stan all the time, every week he would go down, but he hadn't seen him in years. That's the Jack Keller story of, you know, how Joe Sinnott became Jack Keller.

Fantastic Four #92

JS: We mentioned Kirby coming back to Marvel before and you know when he came back, I don't know what Jack wanted or didn't want, but he did a lot of covers, *The Invaders* covers and *The Fantastic Four* and Marvel, John Verpoorten, put me on a lot of those covers and that was interesting but I never worked on anything that Kirby penciled the whole story. His attitude I don't think was there, he didn't have the old gung-ho spirit it seemed. He didn't want to do the FF, [though] I can't imagine why because that was his number one book. So anyway he called me up, I should say Mark Evanier called me up, wanting to know if I would ink the Fighting America which I did, and it was a lot of fun doing it by the way. So anyway Jack did call me he said "Joe, how much do I owe you for the ink job?" I said nothing Jack, I said just do me a personal sketch of the Thing for Mark, Mark was like 8, 9 years old at the time, he loved the thing. A couple days later I got this Thing drawing, he drew him as a cowboy, the Cisco Thing. A couple years later, I decided to ink it, so I inked it and after I inked it, I said "I should color it" and I colored it and it come out pretty nice you know. Now it's one of Mark's heirlooms so to speak you know, Mark would never get rid of it.

Fantastic Four #55

This interview is taken from the video interview conducted with Joe and can be found on Creator Chronicles: The Interviews 2007-2014, available on Bluray and a limited-edition signed DVD. For more information or to order this Bluray, please visit http://www.amdalemedia.com/ccvideo.shtml.

Two Decades of Comic Book Movies Part 3

The Marvel Films Movies

In our previous articles, we delved into Hollywood's early super hero movie efforts, and the films of DC comics, which for many years were the only significant big-screen presence of comic book super heroes.

In this article, we will be examining movies about Marvel characters and stories from their comic books. Note that these are not necessarily movies made *by* Marvel, nor those made by the more recent Marvel Studios. We will be covering the modern Marvel Studios movies next issue. Most of the movies in this article are made by various studios with varying levels of input (usually little or none) from Marvel itself.

Marvel's movies weren't always the box office champs with wide audience appeal they are today. Marvel had the rockiest of roads in bringing their characters and stories to the big screen in a way the movie going public at large would respond to.

Marvel's very first foray into live-action was the 1944 *Captain America* serial, which was then a Timely Comics character. This was a 15 chapter serial "movie" shown in theaters over 15 weeks, and was made by Republic Pictures. Republic at that time was cranking out low budget, quickly produced serials as fast as they could make them, and the production shows in the cheesy costumes, rushed acting, and paper-thin stories. Cap wouldn't get a good representation in the movies for over 60 years, though a few attempts were made.

When Timely became Marvel in 1961, they would first turn their efforts to the small screen. Television would be their primary outlet for adaptations of their works beyond the comics page, beginning in the mid 60s with *The Marvel Super Heroes* show. Little more than still images from the comics with voice-over and virtually no animation to speak of, this anthology show of shorts was a very low-end effort. In 1967, a pair of properly produced and animated cartoons would appear - *The Fantastic Four* and the legendary *Spider-Man*, the theme song of which would become one of the most well known of all time. Marvel would continue to produce various animated television shows of their comics every 10 years or so until the present day.

By the time the 70s rolled around, DC was firmly entrenched on TV, with their Saturday morning cartoons and live-action kids programs, as well as prime time shows like *Wonder Woman*. In 1977, Marvel would launch a pair of live-action prime time TV shows: *Spider-Man*, which capitalized on the Sesame Street *Spidey Super Stories* segments, and *The Incredible Hulk*, excellently portrayed by Bill Bixby as David Banner and Lou Ferrigno as the Hulk. The show would bring a more dramatic, sober and thoughtful look at the hero, with a tragic, more human element. It would be the high water mark for super heroes on TV until the next millennium. Along with the weekly shows, Hulk, Spiderman, Dr. Strange, and Captain America would all have 2-hour TV movies devoted to them from 1977-1979, some of which were "pseudo" tv movies made up of 2-part episodes, which was a popular method at that time of reusing old episodes to make them seem like a new event.

The Marvel Age of Movies began with...Howard the Duck?

There was some talk of attempting an X-Men movie as early as 1982, and the early 80s is also when serious talk began about finally bringing Spider-Man to the movies proper. All of these would fall through and take many more years to reach fruition, after *Batman* would show everyone the way.

So after all this development on TV, and lots of promise in the early 80s, it turns out that the first real, actual big screen Hollywood Marvel live action comic book movie was...***Howard the Duck*** (1986). Yes, you read that right. *Howard the Duck*.

Co-produced by Lucasfilm and featuring some good puppet work that expanded on their earlier Yoda character, Howard went for the kid humor and left out all the biting social commentary and sarcasm of the original character. Instead of an acerbic, cigar-chomping malcontent, Howard was instead portrayed as more of a schlub everyman worker bee transported to Earth in a fish-out-of-water scenario. Gloria Katz, who adapted the screenplay, was famously quoted as saying "It's a film about a duck from outer space... It's not supposed to be an existential experience" thus keeping intact Hollywood's almost willful blindness in understanding the source material of their adaptations.

Marvel would have to wait another decade until this sort of thinking would change enough to give a real, and good, interpretation of a Marvel character.

The Punisher - where the only one being punished was the audience

Until that time, we would get movies like ***Punisher*** (1989) with a miscast Dolph Lundgren, who was physical enough for the role and not much else, set against The Yakuza standing in for the Mob. The entire story, except for the references to his family being murdered like in the comics, could otherwise have been any late 80s action movie with foreign villains. Underdeveloped in the character and acting department, and kinetically overdone in the action, Punisher missed the mark and didn't help Marvel's cause.

Less successful and well received was ***Captain America*** (1990), which did feature a reasonably comic-oriented origin and then failed miserably by making the Red Skull an *italian* with an absurd and hardly frightening accent. The casting of Cap fared better with Matt Salinger giving a fair, if somewhat dull, characterization of Steve Rogers. However, a relatively low budget and director Albert Pyun, who was toiling in low-budget sci-fi movies at the time, kept *Captain America* from being anything more than a curiosity.

Cap does battle with an Italian-accented (and suited) Red Skull

Marvel at this time was a mess. After the massive success of comics like Todd McFarlane's Spider-Man and Jim Lee's X-Men, fueled in large part by speculators moving over to comics from the trading card business, the crash down the other side was breathtaking. The entire comics industry was affected negatively for years, and Marvel would go through trying times ending in bankruptcy in 1995. Out of those ashes a new Marvel would rise, bought by Avi Arad with Toybiz and their partners. From this partnership, Marvel would embark on a more long-range plan for TV and movie adaptations of their properties.

By the late 90s, Marvel movies were anathema, had very little good expectations among comic fans, and weren't even on the radar of the general movie going public. That would finally begin to change for the better when the rights were licensed to New Line Cinema for ***Blade*** (1997).

Starring Wesley Snipes as a day-walking vampire with excessive martial arts skills and a pathological need to destroy all vampires, *Blade* was a stylish and effective movie that played more to the action/horror crowd than traditional comics. Taking the basic essentials of the character from the comics, and largely inventing everything else for the movie, *Blade* succeeds in giving the audience a well fleshed out main character, with clear and easily understood motivations and some actual growth throughout the film. Blade as a character is singularly devoted to his cause to the exclusion of nearly anything else in his life. Snipes plays Blade as a very locked-down and serious character, and this gives the film and its inhabitants more weight and pathos than most comic book movies. This was a hit movie that Marvel desperately needed after all previous films were panned, and it was the first Marvel movie to have an aura of being "cool."

Blade II, when Marvel movies finally became cool

The movie would go on to do $130 million worldwide, good enough to warrant a sequel. That sequel would be directed by one of the most visionary directors of modern times: Guillermo del Toro. ***Blade II*** (2002) was essentially del Toro's introduction to American audiences, and he would bring some eye-popping action sequences and a high level of production and polish to the sequel. In this go-round, Blade would be helped by a crew of vampire vampire-hunters, who hate him as much as they hate the new breed of vampire that preys on other vampires. Confused? Don't worry. Knowing just how far to push the craziness without becoming absurd, del Toro keeps all the balls in the air in a very entertaining fashion.

Blade: Trinity (2004) would be something of a step backwards, with a larger case of main characters, including a wisecracking Ryan Reynolds in what could be considered a extended tryout for Deadpool. David S. Goyer, who wrote the two previous Blade movies, would direct here and the result was less than it should have been. The villains are too cartoony and over the top (and this being said in a *Blade* movie which is built on such things) and the direction tries real hard, but just doesn't have the same esthetics as the previous two movies. A by-the-numbers sequel, it had the effect of killing the momentum of the *Blade* franchise.

Blade is a good example of when we say "doing a comic movie right." Whenever you adapt something from one medium to another, there are bound to be many differences. Much of these differences come from practical choices, like how to make something work as a visual effect, and in other ways like how to condense a large history down to a 2 hour movie. These are not trivial problems to solve, and the more creatively they are handled with respect to the source material, the better the movie will be. It becomes a very fine line to tread, being respectful of the source material, and utilizing it, yet at the same time allowing creative interpretation to flourish as well. The best comic movies manage this feat without violating the spirit of the original comics.

X-Men (2000) is a good example of this idea. Made on a budget of just $75 million, a fair amount for its day but considered low for a movie loaded with visual effects and multiple super-powered characters, director Bryan Singer pulled of something thought of as nearly impossible: bring the X-Men to live-action and do it in a way that pleases everyone. While it has a few rough edges due to a rushed production (the release date was moved up 6 months), *X-Men* succeeds with excellent casting, retaining the most important themes of fighting prejudice and being different, and correct adherence to the sprit of the comic.

The success of the movie was due in no small part to the character of Wolverine. Of course, the casting of Hugh Jackman as Wolverine is seen in hindsight as a brilliant move, but at the time Jackman was still a relatively new actor. The original actor for Wolverine, Dougray Scott, had to bow out shortly after filming began to finish *Mission Impossible III*. This left the production team little time to find a replacement. Jackman was brought in with almost no time to train, so he looks a bit scrawny. Jackman would catch on very quickly to the character and the X-Men universe, and would embody the character so well, few could imagine anyone else in the role.

The rest of the cast is also well-chosen, with the particularly brilliant casting of Patrick Stewart as Professor X and Ian McKellen as Magneto. Great, classical actors, their diametrically opposed ideological views on the role mutants play in the world give the proceedings some nice dramatic weight and raise the super heroics above the usual level of power fantasies.

At a time when very little was expected out of Marvel super hero movies, *X-Men* still exceeded most expectations for what a good X-Men movie would be. It was a hit with fans and the general public.

The inevitable sequel that followed, ***X2: X-Men United*** (2003) would pit the team against Colonel William Stryker, a man involved in capturing and modifying mutants for decades. He leads a team that assaults the school to capture Cerebro to build his own version to help him find and capture mutants. To defeat their foe, the X-Men team up with Magneto and his crew from the first film. This idea of having to join with your nemesis to fight a larger threat would recur throughout the series. With the dramatic conclusion of the movie sealing the fate of Jean Grey, *X2* was a significant improvement over the first movie.

X-Men: The Last Stand (2006) started out with an interesting premise - humans have created a "cure" for mutants that strip them of their powers - but was seen as less than the previous two movies. Placing Magneto back in opposition to the X-Men is the right idea, but the execution is lacking. While it is an entertaining entry in the X-Men mythos, its mishandling of the large cast of mutants in general and Jean Grey/Pheonix in particular, new director Brett Ratner seemed to be overwhelmed and as a result, the movie underwhelmed.

Wolverine from X2: X-Men United - The Best There Is At What He Does

It would be several years before another X-Men movie would appear, and this time the approach would be something very daring and different. ***X-Men: First Class*** (2011) would have a new director in Matthew Vaughn and would be set in the heart of the late 60s cold war. Stylish and retro, *First Class* would have a

groovy feel all its own. Winding the clock back that far, we get much younger versions of Professor X and Magneto, before they were called that, Mystique, and Hank McCoy's Beast, before he went blue. Brilliantly playing off what we know of the future, and made more as a spy movie, *First Class* functions as a origin story for the entire franchise. Dramatic weight is given through the relationship between Charles and Eric and the beginning of their frenemy-ship.

X-Men: First Class

X-Men: Days of Future Past (2014) was a return to form, with Bryan Singer returning to the franchise in a spectacular, huge event film. This time the gloves are off, and a new class of Sentinel has hunted mutants nearly to extinction. Professor X and Magneto have finally reconciled to combat this singular menace, but it may be too little, too late. Along with some new and old faces, they try one last desperate gambit: send Wolverine back in time to his own body in the 1970s to try to alter history, and save the future. Loosely following the comic storyline, Wolverine is dropped into Nixon-era America, and must recruit help from Professor X, Magneto and Beast to stop Mystique from killing a senator who is spearheading the creation of the Sentinel program. They are joined by a young Quicksilver and in one of the most spectacular time-dilation sequences in movie history, break Magneto out of his specially made prison under the Pentagon. The movie is filled with moral quandary's and carries over many of the themes and relationships from *First Class*, keeping intact the continuity.

In between the later X-Men movies were two solo Wolverine movies. The first, titled ***X-Men Origins: Wolverine*** (2009), would go through Logan's origin and taking its cues from the *Origin* comic book. Very uneven in tone and pacing, and with an unforgivable altering of the Deadpool character at the end, the movie was nevertheless a box office success, even if it was viewed as sort of bland and less than it should have been.

X-Men: Days of Future Past - The Future Is Not So Bright

The follow up, simply titled ***The Wolverine*** (2013) would be based in part on the Wolverine limited comic series from 1982 and feature the Silver Samurai, of sorts, as the main villain. Most of the essential elements from the comic are here, and the production and direction is terrific, especially the action sequences, which show Jackman as an uber-buff killing machine. Wolverine is drawn to Japan at the behest of a dying friend, who appeals to Logan to give up his immortality to save his life. Logan refuses, setting off a chain of events that would have his healing factor forcibly removed. The movie is mostly good, and was better received than Origins, but is marred by a bizarre end fight and romantic relationship that seems to exist more because the comic said so than out of any organic events.

As the new century dawned, and after the successes of *Blade* and the *X-Men* movies, it was finally time to give Spider-Man his turn at the big screen. And was it ever worth the wait!

Tied up for over a decade in development hell, including several years where it very nearly got made by James Cameron, ***Spider-Man*** (2002) would finally swing onto the big screen in one of the very best comics-to-screen adaptations of all time. Essentially following the comic origin of Spider-Man and the Green Goblin, director Sam Raimi would follow the comic roots with amazing fidelity, from design all the way to character development. There is a lot of recognizable ground here for fans of the comics, yet with modern and slick movie making at it's best. Raimi pulls every trick out of his extensive bag of tricks here, yet would limit his more idiosyncratic flourishes to specific sequences for maximum impact. It is a master class of film making, with perfect pacing, gorgeous effects, and the kind of free-wheeling action we expect from a Spider-Man movie.

The heart of the movie is, of course, Peter Parker, played with geeky aplomb by Toby Maguire. Adhering mostly to the spirit, and even in some cases the letter, of the source comics, Peter is still a doubting teenager at heart, just trying to do his best with the weirdness that his life has become. It goes right to the heart of the character, and represents the hope we all feel in our lives, but seldom ever achieve. His revelation of his power, and the responsibilities thereof after the preventable death of Uncle Ben, resonate as strongly here as in the original story. Aunt May is Peter's rock, keeping him on course and helping him through his pain.

Kirsten Dunst portrays Mary Jane, here seen as more of a struggling hometown actress than the more self-assured, accomplished model in the comics. Many took the casting of Dunst to task, expressing dismay that a more glamorous and beautiful actress was not cast, but with this version of the character, Dunst's more girl-next-door looks gives her an accessibility that a stunning model might lack. We root for her and Peter to make it and be happy because we feel like they are like the rest of us.

Willem Dafoe's Green Goblin is gloriously over the top, and constantly teeters on the edge of going off the rails, but always manages to keep it working. With the looming collapse of his company and seeming failure of his version of a "super-soldier" formula for enhancing physical characteristics, Norman takes a new version of the formula himself, and as a result is driven insane, letting all his ego and frustration take over his persona. James Franco, playing Norman's son Harry and Peter's friend, would go on to blame Spider-Man for the death of his father. His story would be spread out over three movies.

Most importantly, the movie was Fun with a capital "F," something that had been missing in a lot of comic movies since the comic industry went more adult and grim-and-gritty in the mid-80s. Peter Parker comes to love being Spider-Man, despite the abuse hurled at him from J. Jonah Jameson, played wonderfully to the hilt by J. K. Simons. The people love Spider-Man, and that is enough for Peter.

Spider-Man was beyond a massive financial success. Due to the character having been on TV in one form or another in each of the previous 4 decades, Spider-Man was the most recognizable character Marvel had to the general populace. The opening weekend was a monster: $114 million just domestically, the first movie to ever cross $100 million in an opening weekend (as a point of reference, the first *Jurassic Park* movie, a huge hit ten years earlier, took ten days to cross $100 million). Everyone and their brother almost literally went to see *Spider-Man*. It hit for Marvel like *Batman* did for DC two decades earlier, and the audience was practically begging for a sequel.

That sequel, ***Spider-Man 2*** (2004), would come just 2 years after the first, and while it didn't quite out-gross the first movie ($373m vs $403m) it was considered and even better movie. In the sequel, Doctor Otto Octavius has created a fusion reactor, "the power of the sun in the palm of my hand" he would say. To accomplish this task, he creates a set of four mechanical arms linked to him via an embedded chip in the back of his head. When things inevitably go awry during the initial start up of the reactor, the arms and chip become fused and Doctor Octopus is born.

Played fantastically by veteran character and genre actor Alfred Molina, Doc Ock is more of a tragic figure, consumed by his failure and motivated by his need to achieve great things. When his attempts to reactivate the reactor go amiss again and Spider-Man has to save the day, Otto reasserts himself over his fused chip, and assists Spider-Man in saving the city, and redeeming himself in the process.

Full of great character development where all the relationships get explored and have real growth, and with exciting action sequences that don't get lost in their own cleverness, *Spider-Man 2* is simply one of the best sequels of any movie, comic book or otherwise.

Spider-Man 2

The stage was now set for what should have been a master capstone to the series. ***Spider-Man 3*** (2007) was, sadly, not that movie. Missing in almost every department, this third outing suffers from an overabundance of plot, too many characters, flashy action that gets confusing and goes on and on, and not enough focus on what we all want to see: Spider-Man being Spider-Man.

The movie featured 2 classic villains: The Sandman, here portrayed well by Thomas Hayden Church as a father seeking money to help his sick child, and Venom, somehow underplayed by Topher Grace, along with a revenge-driven Harry Osborne, now with full Green Goblin tech at his disposal. Venom should have been a slam-dunk given his popularity, but here he feels underutilized and should have really been the sole villain.

Falling victim to the actors' vanity of the need to de-mask the main character as much as possible, Spider-Man is barely in his own movie here. While Toby Maguire spent a fair amount of time sans mask in *Spider-Man 2*, here it seems unnecessarily forced. Couple that with flat character development (a dance sequence, even when the hero is under alien influence, does not qualify as a "character struggle") and a lack of focus due to being way too busy with 3 villains, *Spider-Man 3* was a huge disappointment.

Even with all the drawbacks, *Spider-Man 3* had the largest opening weekend in history to that time at $158 million. Word got out fast however, and the box office tailed off sharply after that, and while it would go on to make a still respectable $336 million domestically, the movie was considered a flop due to the strong negative reaction.

Ghost Rider

Sony, who had the rights to the Spider-Man movies, wanted to make another one, but with the harsh reaction to *Spider-Man 3*, they opted instead to do a reboot. ***The Amazing Spider-Man*** (2012) was the result, and it was actually a pretty fine effort. This time around, Gwen Stacy, played by Emma Stone, would replace Mary Jane, and a younger Aunt May played by Sally Field would round out the main cast. Andrew Garfield would land the role of the new Peter Parker, and the director Marc Webb would give the actors a little bit of room to work with their characters. The result is a well acted character piece with a solid story and effects that rank right up there with the best.

The Amazing Spider-Man 2 (2014) was rushed into theaters a scant two years after the reboot, and it shows. Electro is the main villain, and what should have been a cool modern updating instead becomes just another angry caricature. The Green Goblin shows up nearly at the end of the movie, and it feels jammed in just so we can play out a version of the death of Gwen Stacy. It feels cheap, rushed and exploitive. A huge disappointment on all levels.

The Spider-Man movies would each make successively less than the previous, and *ASM2* would come in at just $200 million, less than half the first film.

With the success of the *X-Men*, *Blade* and *Spider-Man* movie franchises, it was time to expand Marvel's movie offerings beyond the larger, established core movies. Plans were put in place to utilize the larger roster of characters, but these plans would get derailed by a less than stellar response to poor efforts.

Hulk (2003) at least tried to come at the character a little differently. With a great cast in Eric Bana as Banner, Jennifer Connelly as Betty and Nick Nolte as Father, and directed by Ang Lee, this had high expectations written all over it. At first, it looks like they are going to pull it off, with nuanced performances and an appropriately impressive Hulk. Unfortunately, it focused on the child abuse storyline from the comics, which turned a lot of people off. It also didn't help that the Hulk was more of a bright florescent green, and looked more like Brock Lesnar than Eric Bana. The end confrontation between Hulk and Father devolves into a giant cloud monster, which would become an annoyingly recurring theme in many comic movies.

The Fantastic Four (2004) - Not Quite The Worlds Greatest Superheroes

Daredevil (2003) and ***Elektra*** (2005) went the furthest in trying to match the comics, but only managed to match them in plot details, and not the atmosphere or substance. Up to about 2007, comic movies were still mired in last-century thinking on how to bring comics to the screen. *Daredevil* and *Elektra* are prime examples of how there was a glut of mediocre movies after *Blade* and *X-Men*.

The Punisher (2004) and ***The Punisher: War Zone*** (2008) were likewise good but not great takes on the character. Better by far than the 1989 movie, they didn't catch on despite some good acting and decent stories.

Ghost Rider (2007) would attempt to tap into that Blade horror-action audience, but didn't have the style or charismatic main character to pull it off. Nicolas Cage is a game Johnny Blaze, but the supernatural elements were just too out-there to connect to a mass audience. The effects were good however, and were greatly improved in the sequel ***Ghost Rider: Spirit of Vengeance*** (2012), which looked amazing but was a complete shambles of a movie otherwise. Totally uncorking and indulging in the worst aspects of over-the-top filmmaking, the sequel is a loud, obnoxious tour-de-force of pure nonsense.

Which brings us to the mess that is the Fantastic Four movies. The first family of comics and the Marvel Universe, FF should be a bullseye in just about any hands. The classic Lee/Kirby/Sinnott stories are right there for the taking, wonderful source material that should be easily adapted to the drama/comedy format. They even had a great blueprint to go by in The Incredibles, which unfortunately came out just months before the first *Fantastic Four* movie in 2004.

Actually, that is not entirely correct. The actual *first* FF movie was never released. Produced by Roger Corman, the infamous ***Fantastic Four*** (1994) actually followed the comics pretty closely, and is the only big screen movie to not tie Victor Von Doom's origin to the FF's. Shot quickly on zero budget, it was made to retain the movie rights, which every subsequent FF movie would also do. The time and budget show, especially in the sets and performances. Everyone here is game, but there just isn't enough to work with to make a quality movie. This does have the distinction of being one of the earliest uses of CGI to fully animate a person, the Human Torch.

The two movies we got, ***Fantastic Four*** (2004) and ***Fantastic Four: Rise of the Silver Surfer*** (2007) were decent takes on the comic. Neither horrible nor right on the money, they are just okay. They get most of the broad strokes right, but are held back by casting, especially Doom, and a little too simplistic storytelling.

Fantastic Four (2015), yet another "get it done" to retain the rights, is Fox's second reboot and third attempt at a hit FF movie. Trying something completely different, Fox turned the reigns over to Josh Trank, who had never read the comics, and starring a cast who had ever read the comics, the movie was, shall we say, a disaster.

In a way, it went all the way back to the very beginning of the roots of the comic, which was born out of the 50s atomic bomb fears and the then-prevailing Marvel trend of monster comics. You will notice that the emphasis there and here is on the physical distortions of the body due to radiation effects. This movie is actually a SciFi/horror movie at its core.

Too much of FF seems recycled from other comic book movies. It has a sense of having seen all this before, and specifically and not in the "well, it's a comic book movie" sense. There was a distinct "heeeeey...I think I've seen this in the other Marvel movies before" feeling several times in this movie, and this means specific sequences and setups, not just vague similarities. It just kept recurring over and over throughout the movie. This wasn't the classic FF we all wanted. Not quite as bad as it is being made out to be, but not nearly good enough to be anything anyone wants to see.

The current trend, mostly by DC these days, of making movies more realistic and "gritty" is inappropriate for an FF movie. They tried to Man of Steel this movie (SciFi-focused story, more serious tone) but skipped all the elements that make the FF what it is. There was almost no character interaction, Dr. Doom has ill-defined motivations and the final battle is short to the point of feeling thrown together on a whim. The movie is simply no fun.

Join us next month when we explore the Marvel Studios movies from Iron Man to Avengers, as Marvel builds a Universe.

No, give me FANTASTIC FANZINE SPECIAL TWO!

by Ken Meyer, JR.

Fantastic Fanzine Special 2: *February 1972*
Editor: *Gary Groth,* ***Publisher:*** *Alan Light*

We are back in spectacular…no, make that special fashion…with Gary Groth's second special issue of Fantastic Fanzine (and a special wraparound Dave Cockrum cover, seen above).

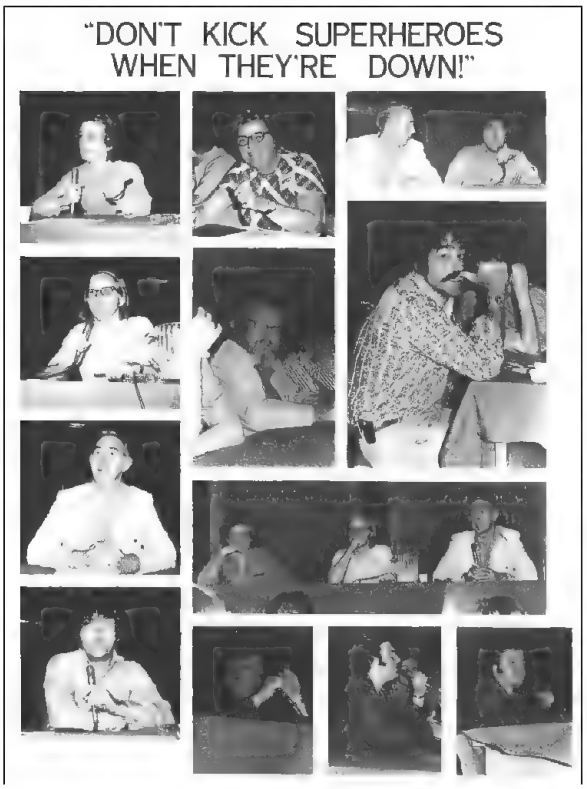
Regular readers know that Gary Groth started at a very young age learning the ropes of publishing with this wonderful fanzine. He later became the guiding light behind probably the best regular comics magazine ever, The Comics Journal (and Fantagraphics). Gary told me via email about the gap between FF and TCJ, saying, "The first Journal came out in the summer of '76, so that's a little over five years. During that sordid period, I dropped out of college, put on a rock 'n' roll convention ('75), started publishing a rock 'zine called Sounds Fine, started a mail order underground comix business that lasted a few years, published a monthly comics newsletter, and was employed just enough of the time to keep a roof over my head and pancakes on the table." He also mentioned that he published Word Balloons when he was in the first year of college, along with a few other small 'zines. As much as any fanzine editor of the time, he built an amazing stable of artists and writers, many of which went on to become stars and stalwarts of the comics and animation industries. This issue, the FF special number two, has a wide variety of features, so let's dive in!

Conventions play a major part of this issue, specifically the 4th annual New York comic convention. This, the first major comic con, was started by Phil Seuling, so it is appropriate that in addition to covering the convention very thoroughly, this issue features an interview with Seuling himself, seen at left. If it wasn't for Seuling, we would probably not have comic conventions like we do today.

Other convention articles include coverage of the opening address by James Warren (Warren publications), the Warren Awards panel, the film schedule, the Goethe Awards, a Harvey Kurtzman talk, a Kirk Alyn (Superman) panel, the awards luncheon (talks by Gardner Fox and Jim Steranko), a Steranko presentation, an EC comics panel, a Frederick Wertham (Seduction of the Innocent, an early indictment of comics in general and EC comics in particular) panel, a Spirit

slideshow, and the Masquerade competition, featuring none other than the winner, Mike Zeck as Black Bolt! Mike has some photos on his Facebook page (in addition to his own photos from this very same convention). You can see his triumphant accepting of first place below.

Now, is that cool or what? Convention coverage was done by Groth, Jeffrey Wasserman, Bob Zimmerman, Carter Scholz, Mike Catron, Alan Brennert, Carl Gafford, Paul Levitz (Yup, that Paul Levitz!), Martin Pasko, Bill Cantey, and Bill Wilson (The Collector). You should recognize several names from that list alone! Below you see one more convention pic, a group of various professionals attending. Top row is (left to right) Denny O'Neil, Marie Severin, Gil Kane/Len Wein; second row is Roy Thomas, Bill Gaines (EC, Mad), Sergio Aragones; next row is Gil Kane, O'Neill/Thomas/Kane; and last row is Wein and a triple shot of Neal Adams (of course!). Again, you can see more and better quality pics on Mike Zeck's Facebook page (in his folder on this con).



Other articles include a funny and personable "So, You're David Berg?" by Bernie Bubnis (David Berg of Mad Magazine), "Pray for Simon Savage" (by Hank Rosenfeld, covering Capt. Savage and his Leatherneck Raiders), the editorial, the letters column, and a "...past...artistic triumphs," from which the John Fantucchio Spider-Man, and bold Kirby-like Barry Smith illustrations below were gleaned from (among other articles covered later).

Silver Surfer by Barry Smith

Spider Man by John Fantucchio

Jan Strnad and Robert Kline contribute a funny article on the perils of fanzine publishing in the middle of the Kansas plains, complete with a western theme provided by Kline. You will see one of his illustrations at the very top of the page as part of the banner. More Kline later! Bill Cantey gives us some Star Trek fan fiction in "The Hole in the Universe," illustrated by Bill Marchesano and Dave Cockrum (seen below), with a typically beautiful Kenneth Smith logo.

Dave Cockrum also appears in several spots in this issue, being a Fantastic Fanzine regular. Another bit of fiction comes to us via Jim Wilson in "The Anderson Incident." This is interesting in the fact that the characters are actual fanzine editors and writers, including Groth himself, as well as Carter Scholz, Bill Cantey, Wasserman, and others. It is quite a well written and sometimes harrowing story about a young but incredibly talented writer being forced into a stay in an authoritarian boarding school which breaks his talent, his drive, and eventually his will to live. Heavy for a fanzine, and well done. It is illustrated in a smartly minimalistic manner by Scholz and Robert Hugel, one illo seen at left by Scholz.

Tony Isabella, usually a regular writer for FF, is only seen in photos from the convention. There is a cryptic line by Groth saying that Isabella would not be writing for the 'zine anymore because of an incident of some sort. 40 years later, Groth reveals more by saying:

> *This is a good opportunity to give Isabella a long overdue apology (if I haven't done this already). What happened was this: Isabella was covering The Warren Awards for the convention report. His piece was highly critical of Warren, such criticism falling squarely within the editorial purview of his assignment. For reasons mercifully forgotten, Jim Steranko disliked Isabella intensely. During one of our phone conversations I must've mentioned to Jim that I had a highly critical piece by Isabella about Warren and the Warren Awards, which prompted Steranko to advise me to a) not run it and b) send a copy of Isabella's manuscript to Warren. Now, Steranko was someone I worshipped at the time and he could be persuasive, at least to me. I remember feeling enough pangs of conscience about this that I called him up several times and asked him once again if he thought this was the right thing to do and asked him to repeat his rationale, which he did. It all sounded reasonable when I was talking to him, but five minutes after getting off the phone, something bugged me about it. Nonetheless, I did. Warren sent me an appreciative letter thanking me, and I regret that I did it to this day. It really was a terrible betrayal on my part. I don't remember anything specific about the fall-out between me and Tony, but he must've been pissed, and for good reason. I should hope that, in retrospect, Jim should feel as badly as I do about it.*

Below you see a piece by the Hawaiian artist Dennis Fujutake, a favorite of mine. He does a few more pieces in this issue, as well. I always loved his Jeff Jones-like style. He went on to create Dalgoda, and has done a large amount of comics work.

There are a couple of great interviews this issue, the first of which is conducted by Gary Groth, with the subject being John Adkins Richardson. Richardson contributed various illustrations to fanzines during this time, but stood out as more of an editorial illustrator/fine artist. He was also a college art professor, and it is a hoot to read the back and forth between the young smart ass Groth, and the academic but still hip Richardson. Something that surprised me about this interview is mentioned in the next to last line in Groth's quote below.

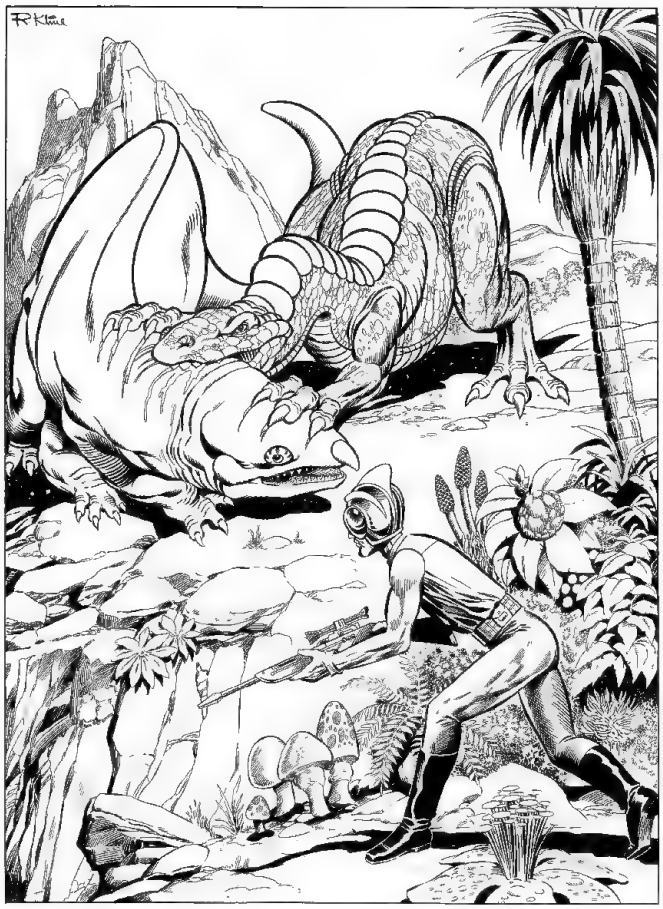
Title illustration by R SHAY

> *I was 17. John was 43, I think. We corresponded a lot, and I published him in the fanzine. I never met him, and I'm not sure I ever spoke to him, but I felt close to him, in a student-mentor kind of relationship. I liked him very much and I think he enjoyed working with this precocious kid. John was a professor of art and design at Southern Illinois U and certainly the smartest guy up to that time to take an interest in comics. A real anomaly. Unknown until now is that John wrote the whole interview himself, using or extrapolating from quotes from my letters to him over the previous couple of years. He basically captured my fan boyish ignorance and played off it nicely with his professorial erudition.*

Because of Richardson's background, many subjects not usually covered in comic fanzines see the light, such as Roy Litchenstein (whom Groth derides), the insanity of

trying to make a living as a comic book artist, the merits of Frazetta vs. Picasso, and the difficulties of drawing a hand, among many other fun and informative topics.

The second interview is with Joe Sinnott and is conducted by the trio of Groth, Bill Wilson, and Duffy Vohland. It is a very lengthy interview, as befits a giant of the industry such as Sinnott, who comes across as an incredibly nice and accessible guy.



Of Sinnott, Groth says, "Mostly what I remember is Joe being a sweetheart and putting up with us — and that shockingly truthful and depressing end to the interview where he basically told us that working in comics wasn't all it was cracked up to be. I had never heard that from a professional before. Obviously, it had little practical effect on me." He has contributed to other fanzines, such as The Collector, much more available than your average working pro. Below you see some FF regulars that Sinnott inked, Cockrum and Kline.

Look at how clean those lines are! Young inkers should pay particular attention to the different line weights seen above. Notice the difference between the mountains in the distance and the figures in the middle ground? Also the difference between the smooth lines on the figure in the foreground and the rocks around him? Sinnott has always been a consummate professional, no matter who he was working over. There are the usual gorgeous illustrations by the FF "bullpen," along with

some assorted "new guys," including Berni Wrightson, Rudi Franke, Mike Roberts, Jay Mike, Donald Wong, and more. You can see the quality in a few spots and full page illos below.

I will let the Dave Cockrum one-page strip be the last we see of this great zine. It must have been a blast to produce, and Groth agrees, saying, "How could it not be great? I was learning by leaps and bounds how to put a print periodical together, fine-tuning what little skill I had. I was 17, in my last year of high school (which is always a breeze — just showing up more or less guarantees graduation), I had a network of like-minded pals all over the country, and I was able to talk to and work with older professionals that I admired and looked up to. I still stay in touch with a number of people I see here. Ken Smith is one of my close friends; I see John Fantucchio whenever I get back East; I've been in touch recently with Jeff Wasserman, who hasn't changed a bit, and it felt like old times. Really old times."

There is much more to see and read, so please go download the zine: http://comicattack.net/2013/02/is-47-ff-spec-2.

My gratitude this time goes out to Gary Groth for answering questions via email. And although I did not have time to insert comments from him, Robert Kline, as well. I did have a great afternoon interviewing him, so keep your eyes peeled for a Robert Kline special soon!

kenmeyerjr@yahoo.com

Charlton Bullseye V1, #1

1975
Cover Price: $1.00
Publisher and Editor: Bob Layton
Associate Editors: Roger Stern, Brian Bauer
Production Assistant: Lee Layton

Contents
Front Cover: Al Milgrom
Back Cover: Joe Staton

"*A Bullseye View*" by Bob Layton (1 page)
- Intro to the new mag and also reproduces a letter from then-managing-editor George Wildman which describes the design of the new Charlton logo.

"*The Charlton News*" (3 pages)
Preview of the new Charlton titles.

"*Nicola Cuti...A Man of Imagination*" (4 pages)
- **Illustrations:** Tom Sutton

Interview with Nicola Cuti.

"*The Many Ghost of Doctor Graves*" by Roger Stern (1 page)
- **Illustrations:** Tom Sutton

Fictionalized "Biography" of Doctor Graves.

"*The Guardian Spiders*" by Jeff Jones (7 pages)
Fantasy adventure comic story.

"*ROG 2000 - A Family Album Part 1: The First 99*" by John Byrne (1 page)
Mostly text with some single illustrations of the ancestors of ROG, from a lowly tractor, to a fighter plane, to a robot bunny rabbit.

"*Blue Beetle: The Boys in Blue*" by Franklin W. Maynerd (3 pages)
- **Illustrations:** Al Milgrom

History of Blue Beetle in comics.

"*From The Top: Secret Bullseye Files*" (1 page)
Dossiers on The Ghost, Captain Atom and Nightshade.
"*Captain Atom: Showdown in Sunuria*" (10 pages)
- **Story:** Dave Kaler and Jon G. Michaels
- **Art:** Steve Ditko and John Byrne

First new Captain Atom story in 8 years. Guest starring Nightshade.

Charlton Bullseye V1, #2

1975
Cover Price: $1.00
Publisher and Editor: Bob Layton
Associate Editors: Roger Stern, Brian Bauer
Production Assistant: Nicola Cuti, Lee Ann Layton

Contents
Front Cover: E-Man by Joe Staton
Back Cover: Al Milgrom

ROG 2000 pin-up by John Byrne

"*A Bullseye View*" by Bob Layton (1 page)
Editorial.

"*The Charlton News*" (2 pages)
Preview of the new Charlton titles.

"*Captain Atom: Two Against Sunuria!*" (11 pages)
- **Story:** Dave Kaler and Roger Stern
- **Art:** Steve Ditko and John Byrne

Captain Atom poster by Jim Starlin.

"*George Wildman...A Progressive Editor*" *(3 pages)*
- **Illustrations:** George Wildman and Warren Sattler

Interview with George Wildman.

"*Ghostly Tales*" by Roger Stern (1 page)
- **Illustrations:** Al Milgrom

Fictionalized "Biography" of Mr. Dedd.

"*There Was a Boy*" by Howard Siegel (3 pages)
- **Illustrations:** Howard Siegel, Don Newton, John Buscema

History of The Nature Boy in comics.

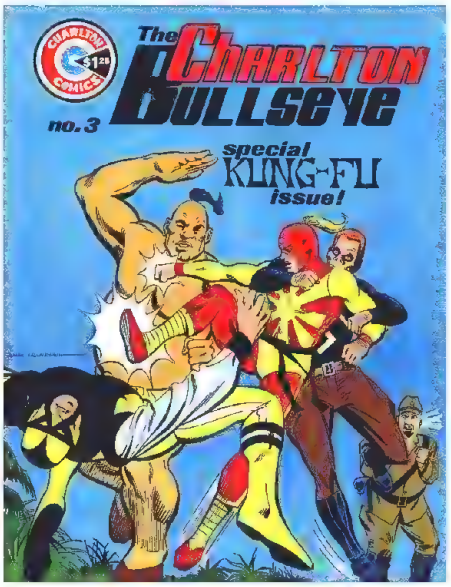
"*Bullseye Fan Fare*" (1 page)
Letters page.

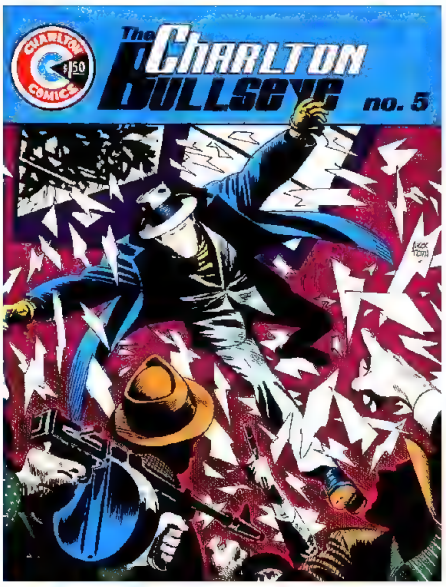
"*Moonshift*" (5 pages)
- **Story and Art:** Steve Ditko

SciFi comic story.

Charlton Bullseye V1, #3

1975
Cover Price: $1.00
Publisher and Editor: Bob Layton
Associate Editors: Roger Stern, Brian Bauer
Production Assistant: Lee Layton





Contents
Front Cover: Frank McLaughlin
Inside Front Cover: Mike Zeck
Back Cover: Gray Morrow

"*The Charlton News*" (4 pages)
Preview of the new Charlton titles.

"*There Be Dragons In Derby!*" by Roger Stern
(3 pages)
- **Illustrations:** Warren Sattler and Pete Morisi.

Article on Charlton's martial arts characters.

"Wrong Country" (24 pages)
- **Story and Art:** Sanho Kim

Charlton Bullseye V1, #4

1976
Cover Price: $1.00
Publisher and Editor: Bob Layton
Assistant Editor: Phil Wesner
Production Assistant: Lee Layton

Contents
Front Cover: E-Man by Joe Staton
Inside Front Cover: Peacemaker by Walt Simonson
Back Cover: Thunderbolt by Al Milgrom

"*A Bullseye View*" by Bob Layton (1 page)
Editorial.

"E-Man" (10 pages)
- **Writer:** Nicola Cuti
- **Art:** Joe Staton
- **Letterer:** Pete Iro

"*The Charlton News*" (2 pages)
Preview of the new Charlton titles.

"E-Man" (1 page)
- **Illustration by:** Frank Throne

"*An Introduction to Charlton Science Fiction*" by Roger Stern (1 page)
History of *Space Adventures* comic and other Charlton SciFi titles.

"There Will Be Time" (11 pages)
- **Story and Art:** John Byrne
- **Editor:** George Wildman

Doomsday+1 story.

"*ROG-2000 Interviews His Creator*" by John Byrne (1 page)

Charlton Bullseye V1, #5

1976
Cover Price: $1.50
Publisher and Editor: Bob Layton
Assistant Editor: Phil Wesner
Production Assistant: Lee Layton

Contents
Front Cover: The Question by Alex Toth
Inside Front Cover: The Question by Carl Potts
Back Cover: Doomsday +1 by Neal Adams

"*The Charlton News*" (1 pages)
Preview of the new Charlton titles.

"*Bullseye Fan Fare*" (1 page)
Letters page.

"The Question" (8 pages)
- **Writer:** Michael Uslan with Roger Stern
- **Art:** Alex Toth

"*Flash Gordon: We Sing of Arms and Heroes!*" by Dan Svengrett (1.5 pages)
A look at Charlton's Flash Gordon comic and other King Features' characters.

"*The Phantom*" by Curt Ramsey (1.5 pages)
- **Illustrations:** Pete Morisi.

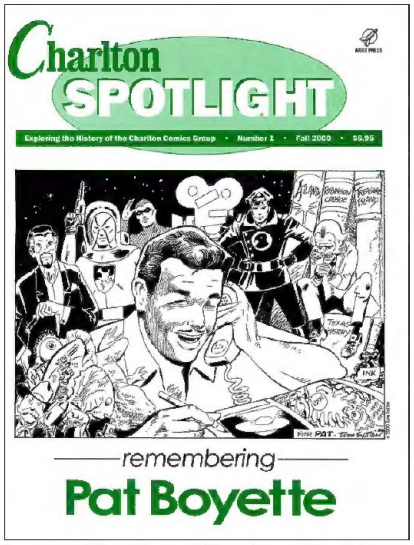
Flash Gordon pin-up page by Mike Nasser and Jack Abel

"*A Discussion with Don Newton*" by Howard Siegel (3 pages)
- **Illustrations:** Don Newton and Dave Cockrum

Interview with Don Newton.

"Timeslip - Conclusion" (11 pages)
- **Story and Art:** John Byrne
- **Splash Page:** by Joe Brozowski and Terry Austin
- **Editor:** Roger Stern

Doomsday+1 story.



Charlton Spotlight #1

Fall 2000
Cover Price: $6.95
Publisher and Editor: Mike Ambrose

Contents
Front Cover: Pat Boyette tribute by Tom Sutton
Back Cover: Jim Amash

"In Memoriam" by Mike Ambrose (1 page)
Editorial.

"*Remembering Pat Boyette*" (15 pages) by Joe Gill, Steve Skeates, Alex Toth, Ron Franz, Jim Amash, Bill Pearson, and Robin Snyder.
- **Illustrations:** Bernard Krigstein

"*Biographical Features and Resources*" (2 pages)
Additional info about Pat Boyette.

"*Charlton Shivers: Those Boyette Heads*" by Ramon Schenk (3 pages)

"*Pat Boyette*" by James Cassara (1 pages)

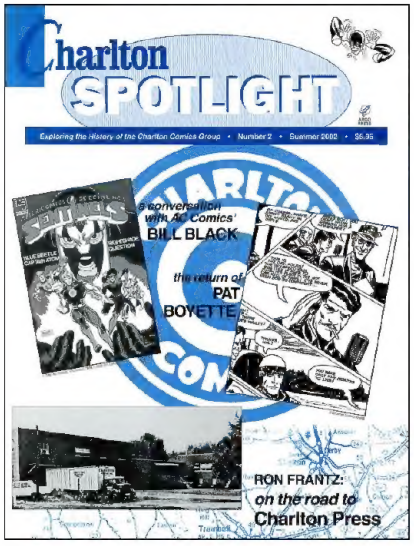
"*The Pat Boyette Gallery*" by Dan Stevenson (5 pages)

"*The Pat Boyette Index*" by Don Magnus (10 pages)

"*The Films of Pat Boyette*" by Don Magnus (1 pages)

"*Pat Boyette's Best Warren Work*" by Ramon Schenk (3 pages)

"*Charlton Comics Checklist* " by Dan Stevenson (6 pages)



Charlton Spotlight #2

Summer 2002
Cover Price: $5.95
Publisher and Editor: Mike Ambrose
Contributing Editors: Ron Frantz & Ramon Schenk

Contents
Front Cover: Ron Frantz
Back Cover: Nature Boy by John Buscema

"Wild Bill Speaks Out: A Conversation With Bill Black" (4 pages) by Ramon Schenk

"*It's a Long, Long Way to Derby*" by Ron Frantz (6 pages)
Account of Ron's trip to Charlton in 1987.

"*Working With Pat*" (3 pages) by Marty Bauman
Memoir of collaborating with Pat Boyette on his last work.

"*The Pat Boyette Index: Addenda*" by Don Magnus (2 pages)

"*Charlton Classic Reprint*" (6 pages)
- **Art:** Joe Shuster

Reprint of "Give Back My Body" from *Strange Suspense Stories* #19.

"*Origin of a Super Hero: Mr. Jigsaw and Charlton Comics*" by Ron Fortier and Gary Kato (4 pages)

"*The Division Street Ramble*" by Michael Ambrose (9 pages)
Editorial, letters, and news.

"*Charlton Comics Checklist Year by Year Part 1: 1944-1954*" by Dan Stevenson (6 pages)

Charlton Spotlight #3

Winter/Spring 2004
Cover Price: $7.95
Publisher and Editor: Mike Ambrose
Contributing Editors: Ron Frantz and Ramon Schenk

Contents
Front Cover: *Ghostly Tales #106*
Back Cover: *The Many Ghosts of Dr. Graves #50*

"*The One and Only Tom Sutton*" by Mike Ambrose (2 pages)
Editorial.

"*Tom Sutton Speaks*" by Mark Burbey (8 pages)
Interview with Tom Sutton.

"*Who Better?*" by Steve Skeates (3 pages)
Interview with Tom Sutton.

"*Tom Sutton: My Collaborator and Friend*" by Nicola Cuti (1 page)

"*Charlton Classic Reprint*" by Nicola Cuti (8 pages)
Reprint of "The Anywhere Machine" from *Ghostly Tales #107*.

"*Tom Sutton: An Original One Of A Kind Stand Alone Character* " by Bill Pearson (5.5 pages)

"*A Few Words About Tom Sutton*" by Batton Lash (1/2 page)

"*Talking to Tom*" by Jim Amash (2 pages)
- **Illustration:** Jim Amash

"*Sutton Place*" by Bhob Stewart (2 pages)
- **Illustrations:** Bernard Krigstein

"*Tom and Rat! and Me*" by Steve Fiorilla (1 pages)

"*Tom Sutton and The Art of Squalor*" by Stefan Petrucha (3 pages)

"*The Tom Sutton Charlton Cover Gallery*" by Stefan Petrucha (4 pages)

"*The Tom Sutton Charlton Index*" by Mike Ambrose with Mark Burbey (4 pages)

"*A Talk With Jose Delbo*" by Michael Browning (5 pages)

"*Henry Scarpelli: A Look Back at His Charlton Days*" by Ramon Schenk (2 pages)

"*Charlton Memories* " by Ron Frantz (7 pages)
Ron Frantz remembers Pete Morisi.

"*Jack Keller: Flags Home*" by Mike Ambrose (1 pages)
Tribute to Jack Keller.

"*In Memoriam: Grass Green*" by Mike Ambrose (1.5 pages)

"*The Division Street Ramble*" by Michael Ambrose (7 pages)
Editorial, letters, and news.

"*Charlton Comics Checklist Year by Year Part 2: 1955-1958*" by Dan Stevenson (2 pages)

Charlton Spotlight #4

2005
Cover Price: $7.95
Publisher and Editor: Mike Ambrose
Contributing Editors: Ron Frantz and Ramon Schenk

Contents
Front Cover: Thunderbolt by Pete Morisi
Back Cover: Johnny Dynamite by Pete Morisi

"*PAM: Walking the Comics Beat*" by Mike Ambrose (7 pages)
A look at the life and career of Pete Morisi.

"Mighty Tight: Stylized in Black & White" by Bill Pearson (1 pages)
An examination of the art of Pete Morisi.

"*The Going-Gray Kid: Canons & Taboos In The Mild Wild West*" by Steve Skeates (6 pages)
Steve Skeates reflects on his Charlton western work.

"*The Explosive World of Johnny Dynamite*" by Mark Burbey (4 pages)

"*Pete Morisi...Comic Book Artist*" by Glen Johnson (8 pages)

"*Son of PAM*" by Mike Ambrose (3 pages)
A talk with Pete Morisi's collaborator, Steve Morisi.

"*Charlton Classic Reprint*" (8 pages)
Reprint of "Strangler On The Loose" from *Many Ghosts of Dr. Graves #40.*

"*Pete Morisi: Before and After Charlton*" by Ron Frantz (11 pages)

"*With Pen and Brush*" by Howard Leroy Davis (1 pages)
Interview reprint from *The Menomonee Falls Gazette #145.*

"*The Pete Morisi Gallery*" (3 pages)

"*The Pete Morisi Charlton Index*" by Mike Ambrose (7 pages)

"*For 35¢ Plain*" by Denis Tiani (4 pages)
Charlton's monster mags remembered.

"*My Season With Charlton*" by Tom Christopher (4 pages)

"*The Weirdlings*" by Nicola Cuti (1 pages)

"*The Division Street Ramble*" by Michael Ambrose (5 pages)
Editorial, letters, and news.

"*Charlton Comics Checklist Year by Year Part 3: 1959-1962*" by Dan Stevenson (2 pages)

Charlton Spotlight #6

Fall 2008
Cover Price: $7.95
Publisher and Editor: Mike Ambrose
Contributing Editors: Ron Frantz and Ramon Schenk

Contents
Front Cover: E-Man and Nova by Joe Staton
Inside Front Cover: Doctor Graves by Steve Ditko
Back Cover: Unpublished Charlton horror cover by Pat Boyette

"*Editorial*" by Michael Ambrose (1 page)

"*E-Man: Future Tense*" (22 pages)
- **Writer:** Nicola Cuti
- **Pencils:** Joe Staton
- **Inks:** Chuck Bordell
- **Letterer:** Bill Pearson

Full-length E-Man comic.

"*Michael Mauser, P.I.: Fish Story*" (11 pages)
- **Writer:** Nicola Cuti
- **Art:** Joe Staton
- **Editor:** George Wildman

"Charlton Gallery" by Bill Pearson (32 pages)
Art & artifacts, editors & oddities, photos & fantasies and other bits and pieces of Charlton history.

"*The Division Street Ramble*" by Michael Ambrose (5 pages)
Editorial, letters, and news.

"*Charlton Comics Checklist Year by Year Part 5: 1967-1971*" by Dan Stevenson (2 pages)

"*The Weird Kids*" by Nicola Cuti (1 pages)

Dale's Comic Fanzine Price Guide 2015 Second Edition

Price Guide
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Modern Fanzine Explosion!
The only comprehensive price and information guide to comic fanzines and comic related publications
by Robin Dale

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Modern Fanzine Explosion!
The only comprehensive price and information guide to comic fanzines and comic related publications
by Robin Dale

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